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Pétur Pétursson

Church and Social Change

A Study of the Secularization
Process in Iceland
1830—1930



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To my parents



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Pétur Pétursson

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1. Introduction:

Theories and the Research Problem

The building of the Icelandic nation-state was roughly synchronous with the political and social mobilization processes which were furthered by the modernization of the Icelandic society.

The objective of this study is to analyse the pattern of religious change in Iceland during the nation-state construction period. Though not limited to the institution of the Church the analysis will necessarily focus on the role of the Church in this respect, keeping in mind its central position in the pre-industrial society.

For this purpose the sociological concepts of secularization, differentiation and centre-building will be of crucial importance.

Stated in other terms, the study is an inquiry into the interrelations between secularization and the first phases of modernization. The starting point of our analysis is, therefore, with the relations of the established religious institutions, and the basic social institutions in the early development of Icelandic society.

The year 1830 is chosen as a starting point because this and the years following mark the onset of the politically inspired national mobilization which was the major social and political force in Iceland, a process ultimately leading to the formation of the Icelandic nation-state. This process was completed for all practical purposes in 1904 even though Iceland was not declared a Republic until 1944. 1930 was the year of the millenium festival of Iceland's primary political institution, Alþing, an event at which many foreign countries were represented as a gesture of approval of Iceland as an independent country. Reykjavík had by then been established as the country's political and economic centre, and the socio-structural changes, urbanization and industrialization resulted in an entirely new socio-cultural pattern that came to regulate the main characteristics of modern Icelandic culture and religion as we know it today.

In this study we are more concerned with the socio-historical formation of this pattern rather than with its later development. For this reason, 1930 is a convenient end point for the study. A more practical reason for choosing 1930 is the author's engagement in an inter-Nordic research group whose purpose it is to study religious and social change in the Nordic countries since 1930.

1.2 PHASES IN THE FORMATION OF THE STATE CENTRE

The nation-state building process for Iceland lies somewhere between that of 16th - 18th century Europe and the new states of the 20th century post-colonial period (see S. Rokkan's schematization 1975: 598ff. His abstractions of the centre-building processes provide convenient points of reference for the following presentation).

Iceland became a sovereign state in union with Denmark by the Danish king in 1918 and was declared a Republic with an elected president in 1944. Until the 19th century, Iceland was practically a colony of Denmark. What distinguishes Iceland from many of the newer 20th century states is that the conditions of standardization of a national culture and the construction of national identity were relatively favorable in Iceland. To this end Iceland enjoyed two advantages; one being geographical, the country being an island in the North Atlantic at the periphery of European society, and another cultural, relative to history and language. Cultural continuity can be traced to the settlement of Iceland by Scandinavians between 870 and 930. Unique institutions and literature based on Old-German patterns and traditions were established and soon came under the Latin influences mitigated by the church. Christianity was adopted in the year 1000.

In 1262, the old Icelandic Commonwealth terminated and Iceland came under the rule of the Norwegian Throne. About 1390, the Danish Crown included Norway and Iceland, and Iceland remained a territory under the Danish state even after Norway's independence.

As in the other Nordic countries, the Reformation was highly politically motivated and entailed both the strengthening of the Crown and the fusion of church and state. It was, furthermore, significant in another sense. The relatively early translation of the Bible (the New Testament was first printed in Icelandic in 1540, the whole Bible in 1584) and other religious literature into Icelandic proved to be of significance for the maintenance of the national language and identity for centuries to come.

The role of the church in the building of the nation-state is a very interesting topic but has so far been neglected by historians and social scientists. It was not an unambiguous role; nevertheless, it seems to have provided a general consolidating framework for the process. Having fallen under the absolute power of the Danish king in 1662, Iceland became integrated into the Royal Danish administration. However, at the same time that the higher secular officials were comprised of Danes, the ministers of the church were Icelanders. The church in Iceland was an ecclesiastical unit apart from the church in Denmark and was headed by native Icelandic bishops. The language of the church was Icelandic, that of the secular administration was mainly Danish.

The question to be examined here is how the changes in the established religious pattern in Iceland were related to the Icelandic national centre building process. This necessarily raises additional sociological questions and hypotheses about the relations of religious and societal institutions. The societal role of the clergy and its position vis-à-vis the political

power is one of the central topics.

In his own, more general way, Max Weber touches on the kind of research problems which appear here:

The destiny of religions has been influenced in a most comprehensive way by intellectualism and its various relationships to the priesthood and political authorities. These relationships were in turn influenced by the provenances of the class which happened to be the most important carrier of the particular intellectualism. (Weber 1964: 118, emphasis mine)

The inbuilt tension in the relations between the church and the secular powers is witnessed to in the history of the Christian religion even though both are representations of the same religious world. In the Nordic countries the Reformation brought with it an extreme variety of "compromise" between the church and state. The Lutheran doctrine was secured as the official religious model with monopoly status in the religious sphere. The Lutheran Church could rely on the use of the secular forces within its territorial borders as the secular prince became paramount protector and chief guardian of the Lutheran doctrine as the only true faith. M. Weber called this fusion "Caesaropapism" (1968:1198). This integration was in itself a significant part of the process of the centre-building of the Danish state whereby the centre penetrated the periphery and brought about standardization upon which the effectiveness of the administrative bureaucracy was based. With the church being so fused to the state the clergy was given an integral part in the Royal administration, i.e. a part of the administrative penetration of the life of the parochial population in Iceland.

In the following we will investigate the social and cultural characteristics of the Icelandic priesthood, its nature as a special stratum within Icelandic society and its stance towards the national cultural traditions. The political ideology of the national movement was based upon, or at least nurtured by, the old conceptions of an independent Iceland as well as the literary and cultural tradition maintained in the Old Icelandic literature and still alive among the people. The position of the national elites and the clergy toward this "intellectualism", and the particular social groups and strata which were the carriers of the traditions is crucial to the analysis. The assumption here is that the sociological inquiry into the "destiny of religion" in Iceland, i.e. the religious changes since 1830 is to focus on the interrelations of these elements.

S. Rokkan demonstrates that the church is one of the four basic factors to be taken into account in the exploration of the particular processes of centre-building, and that it is crucial for a comparative approach in this field of study. The other three factors include the judiciary organization, the military and the cities, i.e. commercial-industrial organization (Rokkan 1975: 564ff).

Relations such as the church-centre linkage, which may be characterized by fusion, alliances or conflicts, are basic dimensions as are also church-land relations, i.e. alliances or conflicts with landowners, and church-city linkages, i.e. religiosity vs. secularization of urban elites (Rokkan 1975: 569). Rokkan suggests a four-phase time dimension scheme of centre-building processes: phase I is the penetration and building up of an institutional infrastructure for the maintenance of order; phase II includes standardization at the cultural level, i.e. the creation of channels for the central elite and the parochial population which become the basis for the identification of the masses with the political system, "...frequently, but not necessarily, in protracted conflict with already established identities such as those built up through churches or sects or through peripheral linguistic elites". Phase III is the active participation, i.e. mobilization of the masses in the functioning of the political system. Phase IV is a process which might be called redistribution, i.e. "the growth of agencies of redistribution, the building of public welfare services, the development of nationwide policies for the equalization of economic conditions" (Rokkan 1975: 571-572).

The late-comers to the process of modern nation-building have had certain problems simply because solutions to the earlier phases had not been institutionalized before yet further demands were raised by the presence of the successive phases. The result of this may be the uneven development of the various sectors of society, causing cleavages and devastating conflicts and antagonisms between social groups and strata more in a state of war than competition according to institutionalized norms (see Eisenstadt 1966: 50).

In Iceland, Phase I was carried out under an alien centre, but the successive phases, starting about 1830, were institutionalized relatively rapidly, and in the fourth decade of the 20th century the development towards a welfare state (Phase IV) was under way.

The starting point of the analysis (the base-line society) will be the church as a part of the Royal centre in Copenhagen (i.e. Phases I and II in the Danish centre maintenance), and then we will proceed to the main focus of our investigation which deals with how the ecclesiastical system nevertheless contained within its framework national values and a cultural heritage, and whether and to what extent it became a part of the national mobilization (i.e. Phases I, II and III in the Icelandic centre-building).

In this analysis special attention will be placed on the clergy both as a social group and as an administrative stratum (Chapters 3 and 4). Phase III, coming in Chapter 5, will be the main focus of investigation, an inquiry into the role of the clergy and the organizational framework of the church in the mobilization process both politically, economically and socially. This investigation will be continued in Chapters 6 and 7 where we will probe into the processes of differentiation and secularization which will be analyzed against the background of the preceding presentation of the specific structural characteristics of the Icelandic society (Chapter 2). But first we will introduce the sociological concepts of secularization and differentiation.

1.3 THE CONCEPT OF SECULARIZATION AND THE PROCESS OF DIFFERENTIATION

The concept of secularization was originally used to denote particular events as the transference of land or property ownership from the jurisdiction of ecclesiastical authorities to the secular administration of the princes, or when a monk or nun left the monasterial life for the outside world (Berger 1969: 106). Later it was included in canon law to describe dispensation from religious vows (Dobbelaere 1981: 9). As a sociological concept it is the legacy of the philosophical concern with the origin and character of the modern Western society, and as such, it is especially linked to the Renaissance and the Enlightenment (Lidz 1979: 196; Luckmann 1974: 93f). It has been maintained, e.g. by Max Weber, that the seeds of secularization were inherent in the character of the Judeo-Christian religion itself, most notably as revealed in Protestantism (Weber 1964: 247ff; see also Berger 1969: 111ff).

In modern sociological literature secularization usually figures in the association of the processes whereby the overarching claims of religious values and institutions become less effective and/or replaced by new values and world views characterized by purposive rationalization and increased control of nature. These are assumed to be the attributes of modern society and the modern outlook and described as incompatible with references to the supernatural and transcendental values and beliefs. Many theories of secularization are influenced by Weber's writings on the "disenchantment of the world" as characteristic of Western development and the growth of bureaucratic social forms (the iron cage).¹

The problem with many secularization theories is that they are too abstract, and when it comes to operationalization and the empirical level, they are ambiguous and even contradictory. What some theorists describe as secularization, others do not (see especially Shiner 1967). That established religious institutions lose their social significance does not necessarily imply that there is less religiosity in society (see for instance Glasner 1977: 109ff and Robertson 1972: 52). Furthermore, religious as well as other institutions may change and assume new functions. New religions are even defined by some scholars as indicators of secularization while others see them as the "real religion".

These ambiguities are partly rooted in the fact that the different scholars use different sociological definitions of religion. Some use an implied meaning of what religion really is or should be while others focus on what it means for society and the individual. Consequently, the various standpoints in this respect lead to different conclusions.²

Another problem with using secularization as a social science concept is that it is loaded with value judgements from the everyday life of social actors. For instance, it has been bound up with different utopian or ideological stances by interest groups and political figures. Theories of secularization have and are being used to legitimate myths about the religious and moral standards of the past. Often these theories are based on a static view of society and an orthodox position in religious matters. Consequentially, all change is compared with previous standards, often in

an idealized and unrealistic version, and the discrepancies noted become tantamount to the degree of secularization and moral degeneration implied. This approach is prone to define as indicators of secularization phenomena we would look upon as religious, i.e. values and beliefs referring to transcendental forces and supernatural objects. On the other side, certain utopian and "progressive" approaches, also within the social sciences and humanities, tend to elaborate an "over-secularized" concept of man as a part of their own secular philosophies. Furthermore, in recent years, since World War II, the concept has figured in theology (Bonhöffer, Gogarten) with quite different connotations, evaluating the secularization of society as positive for the progress of the Christian Faith. (These and related problems are discussed in Martin 1969, Chapters 2-4; Yinger 1967: 22-24; Dobbelaere and Lauwers 1973: 549; Shiner 1967: 51ff and Berger 1969: 165f).

The abstract theories of secularization tend towards a mechanical approach to the process and fail to see the different ideological and utopian interest groups as a part of the process itself. These are part of the process through interactions in social changes (such as differentiation and specialization), in the dissemination of alternative values and beliefs and by reacting to the situation from their own vantage point.

P. Berger asks: "What socio-cultural processes and groups serve as vehicles or mediators of secularization"? but he does not develop this any further into a specific theory of the causes of secularization (1969: 109f). He seems to assume that the socio-structural factors of industrial development are the most decisive carriers of secularization as a mass phenomenon:

The original "locale" of secularization, as we have indicated, was in the economic area, specifically, in those sectors of the economy being formed by the capitalistic and industrial processes (Berger 1969:129).

Berger points out that the relationship between socio-economic modernization and political secularization is rather complex.

Luckmann's interpretation is similar to Berger's.³ Having reviewed the empirical studies on the matter from within the sociology of religion, he states in general terms "that the degree of involvement in the work processes of modern industrial society correlates negatively with the degree of involvement in church oriented religion" (Luckmann 1974: 30). Church oriented religion, he continues, has become a marginal phenomenon in modern society. Luckmann points out, nevertheless, that the empirical findings support him in that no simple unilinear and one-dimensional theory of secularization in modern society can be promoted. The relations between industrialization and secularization are, according to him, indirect. It is through the process of differentiation which makes the overarching claims of the religious institutions less relevant that these are pushed into the periphery of society:

In short, the decrease in traditional church religion may be seen as a consequence of the shrinking relevance of the values, institutionalized in church religion, for the integration and legitimation of everyday life in modern society. (Luckmann 1974: 39)

Berger's general definition of secularization also stresses the differentiatial aspect of the process. According to him, secularization is:

...the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols (1969: 107).

Both Berger and Luckmann see the pluralism of modern society as a feature of secularization which changes completely the social base (the plausibility structure) of religious institutions and legitimations. Religion in modern society undergoes subjectivization and privatization (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Berger 1969: 136ff; Luckmann 1974: 81ff).

K. Dobbelaere (1981) puts forth an analytical distinction which is a significant contribution to the sociological approach to the problems of secularization. He points out that the concept is a multi-dimensional one, and divides the theoretical complex into three components whereby the process of secularization is seen as composed of three distinct dimensions: laicization (differentiation), religious change and religious involvement (commitment). Abstract theories usually assume that these three dimensions are positively interrelated, but, as Dobbelaere points out, the causal and functional relationships are a matter of empirical study and the processes might or might not be similar in contrasting societies.

By religious change Dobbelaere means:

...change occurring in the posture of religious organizations - churches, denominations, and sects - in matters of beliefs, morals, and rituals, and implies also a study of the decline and emergence of religious groups (Dobbelaere 1981: 12),

and according to him religious involvement refers

...to individual behaviour and measures the degree of normative integration in religious bodies. It is an index of the accord between the norms of religious groups - in domains of beliefs, rituals, morals, etc. - and the attitudes and conduct of their members (Dobbelaere 1981: 12).

What Dobbelaere means by laicization is what usually is referred to as differentiation or structural differentiation. But he uses this specifically to denote the consequences in relation to the "overarching claim of religion". Furthermore, laicization is seen as composed of three processes which have been treated in the more theoretical and classical

works of social scientists, and which in Shiner's terms complement each other and can be seen congruently as representing successive and overlapping processes in the history of Western religion and culture. (see Shiner 1967: 59 and Dobbelaere 1981: 11f).

The first of these processes includes the desacralization or disenchantment of society, implying that social functions previously performed primarily by reference to religious values and norms are now performed with reference to "worldly" values and norms; purposive rational or scientific values.

The second process is the disengagement of the social structures and institutions from religious institutions and norms. Certain crucial aspects of social life are emancipated from religious tutelage. Disengagement does not have to be inspired by secularism, i.e. the denial of religious values in society per se (Glasner 1977: 31f).

The third process is the transposition of issues, knowledge and institutions from the jurisdiction of traditional religious organizations and values to a secular sector and secular concern.

Dobbelaere's conceptualization will be adopted as part of the analytical framework of the following study. His concept of laicization is the central issue in this respect; however, we will opt for the term differentiation on the assumption that what Dobbelaere really does is to give this concept, when it refers to religious institutions, a more precise and substantive meaning than it is usually afforded in most theories of secularization.

1.4 DIFFERENTIATION AND CENTRE-BUILDING

In his book, A General Theory of Secularization, David Martin recognizes the "universal processes" of secularization with its origins in the West, but he emphasises that they operate very differently according to the nature of the socio-cultural contexts within which they progress (Martin 1978: 3).

As a study of differentiation and religious change in the process of national centre building, Martin's theoretical perspective is highly relevant. He maintains that there are basically two types of secularization paradigms, the beneficent circle and the vicious circle, and that "the fate and form of secularity in any society very much depends on which type of spiral is operative" (Martin 1978: 16). The vicious circle is characterized by certain spirals of internal hostility, or repulsion, and mutual antagonistic definitions which reinforce themselves, and which makes religion tend to become attached to one irreconcilable side and identified with a particular political position. The beneficent circle, on the other hand, is characterized by spirals of internal compromise and mutual adaptations which reinforce themselves by shifting allegiances and by compromising strategies that reinforce the likelihood and need of further compromise and "where mutual fears do not accelerate and conflicts are not superimposed one on the other to the point where religion is part of one 'package' and irreligion part of the other" (Martin 1978: 16f).

In order to account for the different patterns for the progress of secularization, Martin suggests the following categories based on the criteria:

...whether or not the religion concerned is Catholic, whether or not there is a monopoly of religion, and whether or not the "frame" of a society is set up through conflict against external or against internal oppressors (Martin 1978: 17).

These categories more or less converge in reality and therefore are not to be used a priori as the classification of secularization in each country. They, rather, constitute analytical tools or ideal types which accounts for certain crucial characteristics of particular processes.

For present purposes the comparative approach is only secondary in as much as we are focusing on the interrelations of internal processes of the Icelandic pattern, but these categories are used here - particularly the second and third - as theoretical frames of reference, to be turned to again in Chapter 8, in the summary and interpretation of the findings.

Of particular importance here is Martin's propositions concerning the relations of differentiation and centre building conditioned by the presence of an alien centre:

A dominated society or a society sandwiched between other societies which throw its identity into high relief turns to its religion... The historic role of the church as guardian of a culture and as a substitute state leads to the accretion of further roles and these are carried forward in a relatively undifferentiated form with the onset of independence and/or industrialization...The simple point here is that all internal conflicts are muted by the existence of alien authority or threat and the paramount need for identity is best nurtured from its historic sources - religion and (according to circumstances) language (Martin 1978: 55-56).

This perspective raises again our research question of the interrelations between the processes of differentiation and mobilization within the Icelandic society and how religious change and involvement may be understood as a part of these processes. The relationships between the Church (the clergy) and the nation-building elite (national leaders) in the different phases of the national centre-building process as well as the clergy's relation to the administration and the bourgeoisie are crucial questions to ask in order to be able to explain these interrelations. This will also give us the opportunity of dealing (though superficially) with the role of the official religious ideology and national identity.

It has been maintained both by Icelanders (often with a sense of pride), and foreigners that the religious commitment of the former is less bound up with feelings and extremities than is true of other peoples, and furthermore, that they are more prone than others to assume rationalistic or practical standpoints in matters related to religion and theology.⁴ To

the extent that this is true we would favour an explanation less in terms of national character, looking, rather, into the destiny of religion in processes of social change which makes the religious factor more or less visible sociologically since it might or might not become linked with basic socio-political issues.

It is likely that the more secularization is characterized by the beneficent interrelations, the less visible the religious factors become to the social scientists not acquainted with the field of sociology of religion. The approach of this study intends to make these interrelations visible and to account for their structural characteristics assuming that this would give us additional knowledge of the development of the Icelandic society.

1.5 METHODS AND MATERIAL

A study such as the present one must necessarily rely on various secondary sources, but much of the existing material which describes the historical framework is limited and unsatisfactory in many respects for the particular research problem. As a rule, Icelandic historical works are superficial in their treatment of church matters and religious development. Their focus is mainly concentrated on a political and personal history. Furthermore, the fact that the Icelandic Church history since the middle of the 19th century is virtually unwritten has made it necessary to work with primary sources to the extent that these are available and applicable within the practical limits of the study. Had this material been omitted, basic research questions would have to been attended to with little more than mere speculation.

The material is of different kinds including parliamentary records (Alþingistiðindi), magazines, papers and national archives. The history of religious sects and movements in Iceland is largely unexplored. The information concerning them has been collected from various sources such as papers, magazines and private archives. The author has been granted access to some unpublished works of relevance for the study (see bibliography). In a few cases (especially Chapter 7), the presentation is complemented by interviews with key persons who in one way or another had access to relevant information not available to the author in another form. In such cases the persons involved are referred to in the text. Some sections of the present study, especially Chapters 6 and 7, have already been published in a more detailed and historically oriented version (P. Pétursson 1980a, 1980b and 1981).

Nevertheless, it is not the intention of this thesis to present a comprehensive church history of the research period, and the ambitions do not include a complete historical investigation of the aspects taken up here, the concern being rather, to present the historical facts as they throw light on the main research questions of this study.

The presentation, however, may seem to be too weighty with historical descriptions because of the type of material being used, but it is, essentially, an attempt at a dialog between systematic description and

theorization. Statistics and time series have been included when they have been available and meaningful to the discussion. Unfortunately, this kind of data is sparse. There are few time series which clearly signify religious change and its relation to social changes. The data and the nature of the problem does not lend itself to the use of tests of significance where the impact of different factors is measured as percentage of the variance, but the thesis is, of course, no less sociological for that. Sociology is more defined by the kind of problems investigated than by the kind of material available. Furthermore, religious change can only to a limited extent be validated by statistical indicators.

The intention of this study is to analyse the relationships of the different processes of change on the macro-level of analysis, but because of the rather small Icelandic population and its relatively undifferentiated structure for the period under study, we are, to a large extent, carrying out the analysis on the group level which should not obscure the fact that the structures and the processes are constitutive of the macro-characteristics of Icelandic society. Indeed, this should be looked upon as advantageous because it allows opportunity for closer and more detailed analysis of the particular relations and forces in operation.

Notes to Chapter One

1. Weber did not explicitly suggest a theory of secularization for modern society, but it seems as if he assumed that a process of disenchantment of the world was in some sense a seed of secularization found within the Judeo-Christian tradition itself. It is obvious that he found modern Western society extensively secularized and that this had to do with the increased bureaucratization of increasingly more aspects of modern life (Weber 1970: 280ff and 1971: 155ff). But, for the systematic analysis of religious change in modern society his theories or propositions are often ambiguously abstract and at times even questionable (Robertson 1978: 70ff; Bendix 1977: xlvii f).
2. These differences are related to the debate among sociologists of religion on the substantive vs. functional definitions of religion (see Luckmann 1977: 16ff; Dobbelaere and Lauwers 1973: 538-540 for instance). Robertson points out that functional definitions tend to be too inclusive and less relevant for the study of secularization and religious change (1972: 36-42).
3. Berger and Luckmann seem to adopt a similar stance towards the changes of institutionally specified forms of religion in modern society even if they, in other respects, adhere to different definitions of religion (see Berger 1969: 175-177; Berger and Luckmann 1966).
4. See, e.g. V. Guðmundsson 1902: 20; Á. Ásgeirsson 1924: 95f; B. Jónsson 1966:202; G. Finnþogason 1971:69-72; R. Tomasson 1980:174f.

2. The Socio-Economic Structure

The purpose of this chapter is to present the general characteristics of Iceland's population growth, urbanization and occupational structure for the period under study. In addition, the main means of livelihood will be discussed, especially the transition from the primitive agrarian economy to a more differentiated and specialized economy.

2.1 DEMOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

It has been estimated that by the end of the settlement period in 930, the population of Iceland was about 30,000. By the end of the 11th century there was an increase to about 70,000, nearly one-third of the population of Norway (S. Þórarinnsson 1961: 519-520). These estimations are very gross and of questionable reliability. According to the first Icelandic census, in 1703, the population had decreased to 50,358; the age-pyramid showed it to be a declining population, most likely due to the hardships of the previous decades. By 1800, the figures totalled 47,186, only 5.3 percent of the Norwegian population. Not until the 1820s (see figure 1) does the figure pass the 50,000 mark again after which, except for momentary disruptions, gradual increases occur until 1890, followed by an even greater upswing.

Several explanations have been offered for the decline and stagnation of the Icelandic population. It has been maintained e.g. that the geographical location of the country on the periphery of possible habitation has rendered it exceptionally susceptible to climactic fluctuations and natural catastrophes (S. Þórarinnsson 1961: 520). Others have attributed the decline to deteriorating communications with other countries since the late 13th century and to the Danish trade monopoly of 1602-1787. Considering that Iceland was practically a colony of Denmark, much blame has been placed on the ineffective administrative centre in Copenhagen.

During the 18th century the country was struck by a series of catastrophes, but measures which should have alleviated the situation for the population were prevented by ineffective administration and also by the institutional structure which was based upon the interests of the land-owners. The latter hindered social organizations and technical innovations which could have led to the exploitation of Icelandic waters which have always been among the worlds best fishing grounds (G. Gunnarsson 1980b: 12ff).

Table 2:1 shows how Iceland lagged behind the other Nordic countries in population growth in the 19th century, the former showing an increase of 66%, the latter an increase of over 100%.

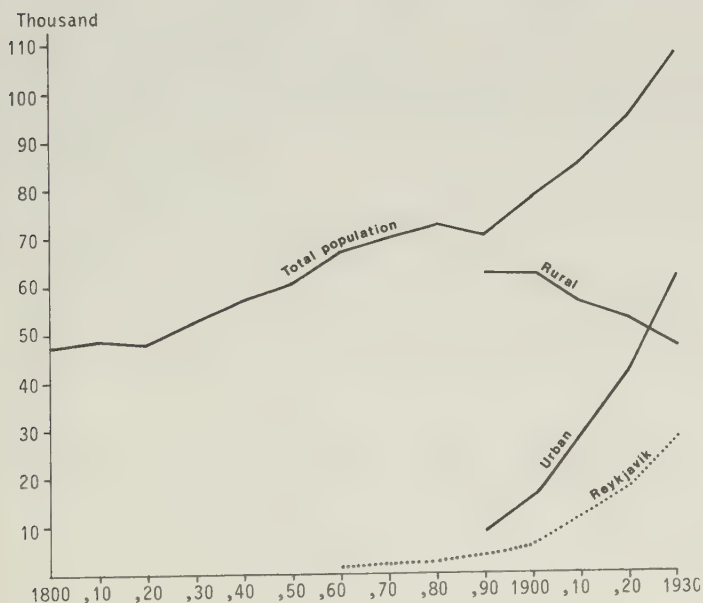
Table 2.1 Population Increases in the Nordic Countries in Percent.

	1800-1900	1900-1940	1800-1940
Denmark	164	57	257
Sweden	119	24	148
Norway	154	33	205
Iceland	66	55	102
Finland	219	39	304

Source: Yearbook of Nordic Statistics 1976, p 32.

As Figure 2.1 shows, Iceland's population explosion is almost entirely a 20th century phenomenon, being initiated in the 1890's. For the period 1900-1940, the growth is relatively high compared to the other Nordic countries.

Figure 2.1 Population in Iceland: 1800 - 1930; Total, Urban, Rural* and Reykjavik



* Refers to settlements with 200 inhabitants and more.

Source: Statistical Abstract of Iceland 1976, p. 21-23.

Table 2.2 indicates a shift in the age structure of the population which, in its turn reflects social change and improvement in social conditions. The death rate decreases noticeable in the 1870s and 1880s, and continues to decrease as the total population grows.

Table 2.2 Births and Deaths in Iceland, in Terms of the Total Population and Infant Deaths (under one year) in % of Live Births: 1846-1930. Yearly Averages

	Births	Still- Born	Deaths	Infant Deaths
	0/00	0/00	0/00	
1846-1850	36.0	1.2	29.9	35.6
1866-1870	34.5	1.1	30.5	25.7
1886-1890	29.4	1.1	21.0	15.1
1906-1910	27.3	0.9	16.2	11.9
1926-1930	25.6	0.7	11.5	5.3

Source: Statistical Abstract of Iceland 1976: 12-13.

One of the crucial factors preventing population increase was the high frequency of infant mortality in Iceland. Table 2:2 shows that around the middle of the 19th century, one-third of all infants died within a year of birth. This figure is much higher than for the Scandinavian countries. Despite the gradual decreases in this rate, it was not until the second decade of the 20th century that Iceland achieved a level comparable to that of Scandinavia (see Tomasson 1980: 67; Historical Statistics of Sweden I 1955: 60; Ø. Øyen 1974: 32). As contemporary observers have pointed out, the high infant mortality rate in Iceland was due, to ignorance in the treatment of infants and to bad sanitary conditions (A. Olafsson 1858: 387). General economic and social improvements which lead to improved housing, nourishment and health care, accounts for the decline since the 1880's. In addition, public health services improved and the efforts to inform the public of better child care through articles and booklets increased.

Figure 2:1 indicates a population decrease between the years 1880 and 1890. This is accountable by the emigration to America which reached its zenith during this period. Prior to this time, just after the middle of the century, there were lesser emigrations to Utah (see Chapter 6.3.1), but the major emigrations did not take place until the 1870s.¹

Iceland was the least urbanized of the Nordic countries throughout the 19th century. Before 1880, urbanization was insignificant but increased sharply after 1890. Using town- and borough-status as the basis for comparison, Iceland surpassed Sweden by 1920. More than 60 percent of this urbanization is accountable by the growth of Reykjavik. From 1920 to 1930 the extent of urbanization was at the same level as that of Sweden and

Norway for the same period (source: Historical Statistics of Sweden I, 1955: 4-8, 21; Statistics of Iceland 1976: 21-26; P. Boje and O. Hyldtoft 1977: 182f; J. E. Myhre 1977: 15ff; L. Jörberg 1979: 385).

2.2 AGRICULTURE

Farming was the basis of the Icelandic socio-economic structure and the main source of livelihood. It can be characterized by its relatively low level of technology and by the absence of grain production. The concentration was instead on live-stock raising and on the production of fodder for winter feeding. The fodder was harvested during a labour-intensive period of a few weeks during the late summer which proved to be crucial for the farmer's survival throughout the hard winter months. The quality of the grasslands varied greatly and manured hay fields were lacking. In addition, farming relied to a great extent on pasturing which demanded considerable space and, consequentially, rendered the preconditions for enclosures in Iceland impossible. The farms were usually isolated from each other, each being relatively independent economically and socially for most of the year. Therefore, unlike most other agrarian societies, rural villages did not exist. Hence there occurred no great reconstruction of agriculture in Iceland on scale with that of other European countries in the 18th and early 19th centuries with the splitting-up of the village communities.

Land ownership and control was the basis for socio-economic status. The most influential status group in Iceland was comprised of the landowners who, having vested interests, strived to maintain the status quo of the ancient social order.

It has been estimated that, prior to the Reformation, the Church (including the bishops who were in charge of the cathedral schools, the monasteries and benefices) controlled 45 percent of the farming land, while 53 percent was private property and 2 percent was owned by the Crown. As a result of the Reformation, the Crown confiscated the monasteries and thereby increased its share, by 1560, to 19 percent of the total farming land value. The Church still maintained control over 31 percent of the land and 50 percent remained private. The land register of 1695 shows only slight changes in this distribution of ownership (B. Lárusson 1967: 60).

In 1760, 28 percent of the farms were owned by the Church (13% episcopal and 15% other church land). At the end of the 18th century, the episcopal land was sold and in 1860 the church land amounted to 15 percent of the total value but the private sector had by this time reached 74 percent. 11 percent fell under the jurisdiction of the Crown (B. Lárusson 1982: 41; Þ. Thoroddsen 1902: 27f).

At the turn of the century, church land still amounted to about 15 percent of the total (Tillögur um Kirkjumal 1906: 119). In accordance with the new laws of 1905 and 1907, practically all land previously owned by the Crown was transferred to the Icelandic National Treasury, together with that owned by the Church except what belonged to the vicarages. This transfer of land from the Church would be the measure of secularization

according to the original meaning of the term (Chapter 1.3), but it says very little about religious change.

By the end of the 17th century, the bulk of privately owned land was concentrated to relatively few families. The register of 1695 shows that 45 percent of this farm land was owned by 7 percent of the 1,212 landowners. This meant in reality that a large majority of the farmers were actually tenants (B. Lárusson 1967: 373). It was the official policy since the late 18th century to offer tenants the opportunity to purchase land of their own, and, upon selling episcopal and crown land, they were offered more favorable terms than other potential buyers. It has been estimated that the number of farms run by tenants decreased from 78 percent in 1850, to 40 percent in 1930 (H. Þorleifsson 1973: 90).

Access to farmland implied that one could get married and establish a household. Practically all others had to be employed as farm servants or labourers on a yearly basis. Casual labourers were not allowed unless they themselves were land or property owners (see the discussion in Chapter 4.3.2). Thus, the main social groups in Iceland were the officials and administrators who were usually landowners as well; an increasing group of independent farmers who had their own land; tenants, and last, the rural labour composed of the servants and farm workers comprising about one-third of the 19th century rural population.²

The majority of the farmers (including both the independent farmers and tenants) were extremely poor which meant that their economies were especially susceptible to catastrophes and "bad years". It has been estimated that with the level of farming technology of the 1860s and 1870s, the agricultural production could not have sustained more than 50,000 people, provided that all arable lands were in use which seems to have been the case (M. Jónsson 1958: 347 and Þ. Jóhannesson 1943: 65-68). For many who had experienced years of failing production, emigration was the only means of escaping economic misery.

Initially, the primitive fishing industry was not capable of providing for an increasing population. It was still dependent on the farming structure. During the winter season when the demand for farm labour was low, farmers in the southern and western coastal areas carried on fishing on a day to day basis as a complement to farming. Some inland farmers and some from the North and East sent their labourers to the fishing settlements for the winter months. Whereas the labourer's share of the fishing produce remained the property of the farmer, the labourer received his normal agreed-upon wages.

This system, which appears to have prevented any significant population increases in the fishing settlements until the 1880's, was looked upon favorably by the land owners, who saw in farming the basis of the social order. It was in their interests to secure and maintain a cheap labour force for farming.

2.3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE FISHING SECTOR

The Danish trade monopoly was formally repealed in 1787; however, trading was free only for the subjects of the Danish Crown. This meant that the previous pattern more or less continued whereby the merchants in Copenhagen controlled Iceland's foreign trade throughout the 19th century. Attempts to break this control proved unsuccessful, and the few Icelandic merchants who managed to establish themselves were dependent on the Danish trading companies. Even these established centers in Copenhagen leaving only representatives in Iceland. This condition hindered the trading stations from developing into larger settlements. Foreign trade was considered almost an alien element in the Icelandic economy since it was in the hands of foreigners who were not considered a part of the Icelandic socio-cultural pattern (G. Gunnarsson 1980c: 47f).

Fishing, which in essence was not differentiated from farming, was carried out on a day to day basis from coastal farms in open row boats which proved extremely ineffective. Experience showed that larger and decked sailing vessels were much more effective since they could be navigated out to the fishing grounds more easily and remain at sea for days at a time (For further evidence hereof see G. Gunnarsson 1980b: 14-15). Such vessels, however, were far too expensive for the ordinary farmers and only in exceptional cases were the Copenhagen-based merchants interested in such investments. Several promising examples showed how this proved to be the more efficient and profitable form of fishing in combination with trading, but it had no significant effect on the Icelandic economy until the last two decades of the 19th century.

In Reykjavik, in 1885, a bank was founded which made it financially possible to carry on fishing on a more efficient basis which then became the grounds for urban development in the fishing settlements especially in Faxaflói (Faxa bay). Somewhat earlier, this type of commercial fishing had lead to population increases in the town of Isafjörður in the Northwest. On the East coast, improvements in fishing were primarily due to Norwegian activities especially in Seyðisfjörður.

With the development of decked fishing vessels and accompanying improvements in efficiency, there arose a new category of workers in the small urban settlements to be distinguished from the farm labourers, namely, the fishermen. This marked the beginning of the development of the capitalistic economy in Iceland. Since the 1880s, technical developments have stimulated the development of the fishing sector. Changes within the occupational structure between 1860 - 1930 can be seen in Table 2:3.

A problem arises in attempting to compare the category of fishing using the censuses before and after 1901. Prior to 1901, no clear distinction was made between fishermen and farmers. Farmers who more or less sustained themselves by fishing were included as fishermen. Whereas the table indicates a decrease in the percentage of the population living off fishing between 1890 and 1901, the opposite is in fact true. With the census of 1901, only the professional fishermen, living mainly in the urban settlements and usually having no access to arable lands, were registered as

fishermen. Also, since 1901, all farmers are counted as farmers irrespective of the importance of fishing for their livelihood.

Table 2:3 Population by Industry: 1860 - 1930

	1860	1870	1880	1890	1901	1910	1920	1930
Farming	79.9	75.9	74.3	65.8	68.1	53.9	46.7	37.4
Fishing and processing	9.4	10.0	12.2	17.9	11.7	20.4	20.0	22.6
Manufacturing & construction	1.5	1.7	2.9	4.0	6.5	10.0	11.9	15.2
Commerce, transport and communication	1.6	2.1	2.9	4.5	5.4	8.9	13.6	16.1
Service	4.1	3.8	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.6	4.1	4.9
Welfare roll, pensioners etc.	3.5	6.5	4.3	4.5	5.2	3.2	3.7	3.8
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Statistical Abstract of Iceland 1976: 32

The table shows a substantial decrease since 1901 in the proportion of those living off farming, a decrease which most likely began earlier. The rural population started to decline in absolute figures in the 1880s and continued to do so until 1930.

Some technical and organizational improvements (for example agricultural societies and cooperatives) are observed within the farming sector since the 1880s and especially during the first decade of the 20th century. These contributed to increased production despite the population decrease within the sector (Þ. Jóhannsson 1943: 88f).

In 1930, 37.4 percent of the population lived by farming and 22.6 percent by fishing and fish processing. There was continual growth in manufacturing, construction, commerce, transport and communication and slight increases in the service sector. The latter did not experience considerable growth until after World War II.

Decked fishing vessels undoubtedly represented the most significant factor in the onset of economical progress in Iceland; however, the Icelandic counterpart to the "industrial revolution" in other Western countries would have been the mechanization of the fishing vessels which got under way during the first decade of the 20th century (H. Þorleifsson 1974b: 175ff).

The first petrol-driven engine was installed on a smaller fishing vessel in 1902, and within 3 years such engines were found in all regions (L. Kristjánsson 1944: 84). In some fishing settlements, especially in Vestmannaeyjar, motorized vessels meant both rapid economic expansion and

population increases. Here, the first motor-driven vessel was put into use in 1906; one year later there were 18. The new fisheries were so successful that initial investments were paid off during the first year of operation (L. Kristjánsson 1944: 85).

But more significant for continued economic progress was the introduction of motorized trawlers into the Icelandic fishing fleet. Since 1890, the Icelanders had observed the efficiency of mainly British motorized craft operating in Icelandic fishing waters. At the beginning of the century some Icelanders participated in the foundation of more or less successful trawler fishing enterprises but it was not until 1907, when the first wholly Icelandic companies were founded, that it became an extremely lucrative business for Iceland (H. Þorleifsson 1974b: 180). The number of locally owned trawlers increased from 6 in 1910 to 20 by 1915 (L. Kristjánsson 1944: 90-94). The initial investment capital came from the newly established Bank of Iceland, started in 1904 with mainly Danish and Norwegian capital. At this time, the rapid capital accumulation was more available for investment in the peripheral areas of Europe than had been the case previously.

Around 1915, the trawlers accounted for up to half the total Icelandic catch (H. Þorleifsson 1974a: 111; L. Kristjánsson 1944: 94). Together, the motorized smallcraft and the trawlers provided the coastal towns and villages with an increased and stable source of living. Moreover, fishing produce became an increasingly more important export commodity and the basis for a higher standard of living. About 55 percent of the total export value in 1890 was fish and fish products. The figure increased to 90 percent in 1930 (Statistical Abstract of Iceland 1976:129).³

2.4 REYKJAVIK: THE NEW CENTRE

Throughout the 19th century, Copenhagen remained in many respects the centre of Icelandic affairs as it had been for centuries past. All major decisions were made by administrators in Copenhagen for whom the officials in Reykjavik merely comprised a "service station". As mentioned above, Copenhagen merchants controlled almost all foreign trade and internal trade was very limited. The merchants were able to dispatch their ships directly to the different trading stations along the coast, there being no national trade centre in Reykjavik.

Until 1852, there was but one regular post route per year between Iceland and Denmark, and only in the South where communication was least complicated was the internal postal service anything near satisfactory. In other parts of the country post was delivered only twice a year, taking up to a year for inter-district deliveries especially in the North and East, thus rendering it more expedient for internal post to be sent via Copenhagen by trading vessels (V. Jónsson 1901: 180-184). This, of course, was a hindrance to distribution and limited publication activities. Significant improvements of the postal services were introduced in the 1870s, but general improvements of the communications systems did not appear until the beginning of the 20th century. By then, Reykjavik had taken over the role

as centre for Icelandic affairs.

Reykjavik was the only mid-19th century township in Iceland with borough status, and with its 1500 inhabitants in 1860, the only urban settlement in the country. It was inhabited mainly by officials, merchants and their servants, crofters and craftsmen. Towards the end of the century, improvements in the fishing industry contributed to the population growth.

Table 2:4 Inhabitants of Reykjavik in Absolute Figures and Percent of Total Population

1890	3886	5.5%
1900	5802	7.4%
1910	11600	13.6%
1920	17450	18.5%
1930	28304	25.8%

Source: Statistical Abstract of Iceland 1976: 10f

The most intensive period of urbanization occurred during the years 1897-1908, and was concentrated mainly to Reykjavik and surrounding settlements. Unfavorable farming conditions was a stimulating factor in the urbanization process during these years (Kjartansson 1977: 250). The average annual population increase in Reykjavik during this period was 8.3 percent, and for the whole country for the same period of time 0.8 percent (based on Statistical Abstracts of Iceland 1976: 10). Reykjavik maintained the highest concentration of trawler fisheries, an enterprise also significant since the beginning of the 20th century in the growth of the neighboring town of Hafnafjörður.

Between 1905 and 1917, 28 fishing companies were started, 21 of which operated in Reykjavik. According to one estimation, one out of every 10 to 15 inhabitants of Reykjavik was dependent on trawler fisheries for livelihood in 1910. In the years 1917 and 1925, this enterprise was at its peak, sustaining some 20 percent of Reykjavik; the figure for 1930 was c:a 15 percent (H. Þorleifsson 1974a: 92-95; H. Þorleifsson 1974b: 175ff).

The population status of Reykjavik relative to other towns is shown in Table 2:5 in absolute figures.

The factors contributing most to the growth of the various coastal villages were their positions as trading posts and their capacities to harbour naval facilities. The latter was especially significant in the growth of the towns Akranes and Neskaupstaður.

The second largest town, both in 1910 and in 1930, was Akureyri in the North on the Bay of Eyjafjörður. It was an important trading station and functioned as the capital of northern Iceland. At the beginning of the century, the Cooperative movement within the district had established itself there, thus contributing to Akureyri's distinction as a service centre for nearby rural areas. Also contributing to the town's expansion was the founding of several small manufacturing industries.

By the second decade of the 20th century, Reykjavík had become the trading centre for the entire country, with a new category of Icelandic merchants establishing residence there. Whereas the former merchants who

Table 2:5 Towns with Borough Status and More than 1000 Inhabitants in 1930

	Borough status achieved	I n h a b i t a n t s		
		1890	1910	1930
Reykjavík	1783	3886	11600	28304
Akureyri	1862	602	2084	4198
Ísafjörður	1866	839	1854	2533
Seyðisfjörður	1884	377	928	936
Hafnafjörður	1907	616	1547	3591
Vestmannaeyjar	1918	314	768	3393*
Siglufjörður	1918	72	415	2022
Neskaupstaður	1919		529	1118
Akranes	1941	622	808	1270

(* change in locality area beyond its growth. The figure for 1930 includes the inhabitants of the whole Island of Vestmannaeyjar)

Source: Statistical Abstract of Iceland 1976: 21-23

operated out of Copenhagen were quite indifferent to internal Icelandic affairs other than as concerned their own companies, the new bourgeoisie quite rapidly became a significant social and political force in Iceland. The crucial factor in the new development was the founding of Reykjavík-based wholesale companies operating independently of the established trading companies in Copenhagen. A precondition of this development was the foundation of the Bank of Iceland and the establishment of telecommunications with neighboring countries in 1906. Of further importance was the building of a new harbour in Reykjavík and the founding of the Icelandic Steamship Company in 1914.

At the beginning of World War I, one-fourth of all exports and two-fifths of all imports passed through Reykjavík. During the war, the concentration of foreign trade to Reykjavík increased to 70 - 80 percent of the total (H. S. Kjartansson 1974: 176-181). Though temporarily relaxed with the ending of the war, the central position of Reykjavík was maintained.

The position of Reykjavík as urban centre and the accompanying capital resources and industrial facilities were of course crucial in this respect, as was true of the fact that most major import and export companies and cooperatives had established their centers there. The political importance of Reykjavík had also increased in the beginning of the 20th century as it

became the administrative and political centre of Iceland with the parliament being situated there in 1845, and the minister of Iceland from 1904, as well. Furthermore, the political parties and the political press, which to this time had been active also in other townships in Iceland and in Copenhagen, established centers in Reykjavík (Chapter 6.5.1)

The conjunction of these factors established the breeding ground for the Icelandic bourgeoisie and middle classes, and contributed to the growth of the number of workers and fishermen in Reykjavík at the beginning of the century.

Within a few decades the rapid economic and political development altered the foundation of the Icelandic social order. Reykjavík became the focus of the new order and the centre of the new socio-cultural pattern which characterized Iceland since the early decades of the 20th century.

Notes to Chapter 2

1. For the period 1870 - 1890, it has been estimated that about 10 thousand Icelanders emigrated. The first emigrants to North America spread out to various parts of Canada and the United States; however, by the late 1870s, a colony was established at Lake Winnipeg in Canada called New Iceland.
2. There existed a group ranked under the tenants called the sub-tenants or cotters. These small holders, held in low esteem, often hired a plot of land from the farmers or tenants of larger farms who, by thus sub-letting a portion of their holdings, managed to pass on a share of the rent and taxes to the cotters. In some coastal areas, these cotters were able to support themselves in part by fishing.
3. Since 1901, the national income has been estimated. These estimates have not taken into account inflation but it is known that it amounted to very little prior to World War I. The national income increased from 20 million crowns in 1901 to 37 million in 1914. This gives a national income per capita increase from 254 to 420 crowns, or 5 percent per year for the 14 years period. In 1920, the national income amounted to 132 million crowns, an increase most probably accountable by the extremely high war-time inflation. Using a fixed price index, it has been calculated that from 1914 to 1928, the average increase per capita per year amounted to about 2 percent. Thereafter, the world-wide economic depression reached Iceland (Based on G. Blöndal 1978: 109-111).

3. The Clergy as a Status Group: Education and Socio-Economic Position

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The University of Copenhagen was a crucial institution for the penetration of the Danish centre into the periphery of Iceland. The intellectual stratum was the main source of standardization upon which the Royal administration was based. Consequently, the internalization of higher education was an issue related to the establishment of a national centre in Iceland - the foundation of the University of Iceland in 1911 was the most significant symbol of the later stages of that process.

In this chapter we will deal with the clergy as a special stratum of the Icelandic society and with their position relative to other social groups. All higher education was initially conducted within the framework of the Church and was designed to fulfil its needs for intellectual legitimations and officials. This framework, then, was given the additional function of providing the state with administrators. The education of the Icelandic clergy was the most significant part of the structure of higher education at least until the middle of the 19th century, but the differentiation of higher education and the development of more a varied professional structure is one of the main characteristics of the period of this study.

The main question in this chapter will be how a national culture and identity was maintained within this framework of church and educational system and, specifically, how the Icelandic clergy were placed in this respect, in relation to other professionals and official groups. This analysis is important for the subsequent investigation of structural differentiation and mobilization, the main processes in the establishment of a new centre in Iceland (Chapter 5).

We will also analyse the economic position of the clergy, their sources of income and the changes in this respect, since this is important for our understanding of their relation to the farming class and the rural population in general. This will serve as a prelude to our investigation of the role of the clergy in the local community and of the role of the religious institutions in the maintenance of social order and socialization and the changes in that respect (Chapter 4). This chapter is also to be seen as the basis upon which the analysis of the processes of differentiation (laicization) and the religious reorientation will be carried out (Chapter 6).

3.2 THE LATIN SCHOOLS AND THE INTERNAL EDUCATION OF THE CLERGY

The Cathedral schools in the bishoprics of Hólar and Skálholt where, until the latter half of the 18th century, in every respect the responsibility of the bishops. They were both the cultural and religious centers of the country. Operation of the printing press at Hólar, for many years the only printing press in the country, was a part of the official duty of the bishop, the primary purpose of which was to provide the Church with those books needed for the maintenance of official religious services and to provide the households with religious books¹. The bishops were in charge of the economic administration of the schools and consequently they, at least de facto, determined the principals and teachers. However, the schools were also supervised by crown officials of the Absolute Monarch in Copenhagen.

At the end of the 18th century the economy of the schools was separated from the Bishop's office and the real-estate property of the bishoprics was sold whereafter the bishops and teachers received their salaries from the Crown. In relation to these administrative changes the two bishoprics were consolidated into one with a centre in Reykjavik which, since 1787, had been granted status as a chartered borough (E. Ólason and Þ. Jóhannesson 1943: 345ff; J. Sigurðsson 1842:125). Thus, since the beginning of the 19th century there was one bishop in Iceland and one Latin school situated close to Reykjavik.

The Icelandic Latin school at Bessastaðir (an estate near Reykjavik) from 1805-1846, had a very special function among other such institutions within the Danish State in the first half of the 19th century.² It was the intention of the Danish Centre to organize the school, similar to other Latin schools, as a general educational institution and preparatory for university studies. The theological education, formerly cared for by the Cathedral schools, was to be separated into a special class for those graduates who were going into the service of the Church. However, because of financial and administrative difficulties, these plans were never realized at the Bessastaðir School which, in practice, was the institute for pastoral education in Iceland. The clerical disciplines were integrated with the obligatory curriculum of the school and the graduates were granted the right to become ministers in the Church of Iceland (H. Hugason 1983: 13ff; J. Jónsson 1955: 93).

Because of the special function of the school the principal had to be a Theology Candidate from the University of Copenhagen and several of the other teachers were also theologians. The Bishop was still in charge of supervising the affairs of the school because he, together with the Governor General, constituted the highest internal authority in educational matters.³ With respect to the theological studies the Bishop maintained the special obligation of supervision. As the Governors were usually Danish the Bishop had de facto most to say in the affairs of the school (J. Jónsson 1993: 82; J. Jónsson 1955: 93).

Even though the theological disciplines played a prominent role in the curriculum of the School of Bessastaðir, the theological standard of the graduates was below that of the clergy in other Nordic countries. This was

frequently pointed out by the critics of the school.

The classical subjects occupied a prominent role at the school and seemed to have a more lasting influence on the students' intellectual outlook than did theological subjects. The fact that the theology teachers leaned towards Rationalism in their theology (or some mild version thereof such as Neology), but that the clergy and the people continued in the old Lutheran Orthodoxy, supports this proposition. (P. Melsted 1912: 35; P. Melsted 1897; J. Jónsson 1955: 101; S. Blöndal 1935: 93-95; E. Eúgason 1983: 70ff). The teachers of classical literature were interested in Old Nordic language and the Icelandic literary tradition and contributed significantly to the research and development of these fields. The Icelandic language was not included as a special subject in the curriculum of the school but in exercises and translations from the classical texts to Icelandic the students were able to practice their Icelandic language (P. E. Ólason 1929 106; Þ. Jóhannesson 1950: 380-384).

Outside the curriculum and the formal school-day, the Old Icelandic literature (the Sagas) were read and discussed among the students and teachers. This made the students more sensitive to the native traditions and aroused their respect for the national values. The same literature was also the backbone of the popular secular literature. Often in popularized version, it was a part of the folk saga tradition of the people (see Chapter 4.2.2).

On the average there were 30-40 pupils with up to half of the applicants not being accepted since the beginning of the 19th century (Fjölfnir I 1835:78) This explains why many students were examined by private tutors.

It was usual that clergymen and other intellectuals tutored private pupils, thus making their stay at the school shorter. Until 1833, academics with degrees from the University of Copenhagen had the right to examine their students and authorize their certificate which granted them admittance to the university, and until 1830, they could become clergymen without further education. This meant that a considerable part of all clergymen in Iceland and Icelandic students in Copenhagen during the first half of the 19th century had not received previous formal schooling but had been private students under clergymen with theological degree from the University of Copenhagen. Often the teacher was a relative or a friend of the family of the student. The private teachers, as for a majority of the officials, had to sustain themselves more or less by farming, often with relatively large households. Their pupils were thus brought up and educated entirely within the framework of the domestic farming culture.

Of the 73 Icelandic students who were registered at the University of Copenhagen during the period 1801-1830, 24 were graduates of private teachers in Iceland (based on B. Jónsson 1949).

The Latin school graduates in Iceland from 1801-1830 numbered 171, and from private tutors about 110. The latter decreased sharply after 1830 because of the above mentioned regulations. For the period 1831-1850, the number was 151 for the Latin school and 31 for the private schools (of the latter 19 graduated within the first three years of the period), (based on Þ. Guðmundsson 1912-1941).⁴

Table 3.1 Occupational Status of Students Graduated from Latin Schools or by Private Teacher in the Period 1801-1850

	Latin School		Private Teacher	
	N	%	N	%
Clergymen	207	64	80	57
Sheriffs &				
Law officials	31	10	16	11
Other Academics	20	6	8	6
Farmers	16	5	16	11
Teachers	6	2	1	1
Merchants	5	2	5	3
Clerks	8	2	8	6
Dead before occupation	17	5	3	2
No information	12	4	4	2
	322	100 %	141	100 %

Source:(based on P. Guðmundsson 1912-1941 and complemented by P. E. Ólason and J. Guðnason 1948-1976).

Table 3.1 indicates that students of private teachers did not in any significant degree continue less in administrative and academic carriers. The students of the Latin schools tended somewhat more towards church related service whereas the students of the private teachers tended somewhat more to become farmers. More than half of all graduates became servants of the Church during the first half of the 19th century.

In 1846 the Latin school was moved from Bessastaðir to Reykjavík and the following year a theological seminary was established in Reykjavík to care for the education of the clergy. Following this, a degree from the seminary or the University of Copenhagen was required to enter the clergy.

During the period 1851-1900 about 580 students graduated from the Latin school in Reykjavík (the only one in the country until 1928 when the secondary school of Akureyri was turned into a grammar school). Of these, about 40 percent became clergymen. In 1901-1930, 800 graduated from the Latin school (since 1904 the Grammar School) and 12 percent became clergymen (based on J. Helgason 1896 and H. Þorleifsson 1975). In a way these figures indicate the "secularization" of the intellectual strata.

Table 3.2 Percent of all Graduates who continued into the service of the Church

1801-1850	1851-1900	1901-1930
62	40	12

3.3 UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Since the Reformation the Lutheran Orthodoxy and Royalism of the University of Copenhagen was a crucial factor in the theological constitution of the Icelandic Church and the intellectual stratum in general. Not until the 20th century, particularly after 1911, with the establishment of the University of Iceland, did the University of Copenhagen lose its crucial position in the intellectual life in Iceland.

Ever since the Reformation, practically all university education of Icelanders took place at the University of Copenhagen, including the education of church leaders, the bishops and the principals of the Cathedral schools. The university was the breeding ground for faithful servants of the Royal administration which prepared the Absolute Monarchy of the Danish King in Iceland 1662. Unlike the higher secular officials, the leadership of the Icelandic Church since Reformation were exclusively Icelanders. The control of the Crown over the Icelandic Church was therefore dependent on close ties between the Icelandic intellectuals and the University of Copenhagen. The special privileges which the Icelandic students got in 1579 and free lodging since 1623 are to be understood in this context. These privileges, (which often caused envious feelings among the Danish students) continued until 1918 when Iceland became a sovereign state.

It is safe to say that the university was Iceland's breeding ground for future leaders both for administration, Church and the intellectual life in general. The Enlightenment was introduced into Iceland at the end of the 18th century through Icelandic intellectuals who had studied at the university, as was Romanticism in the first half of the 19th century. These intellectual trends had crucial significance, particularly the latter, for the future development of the Icelandic culture. In the 1880s, Realism was also introduced from Copenhagen by Icelandic students. The relations between the Danish and Icelandic intellectuals were mainly confined to the university and the more academic trends. The students were surprisingly less interested in and influenced by the more common Danish traditions and movements, as for instance Grundtvigianism and the Inner-Mission, except for those who settled in Denmark (J. Helgason 1926: 53f).

It is important to bear in mind that these influences, once imported to Iceland, were always more or less reinterpreted and modified according to Icelandic conditions and interests. The most important societies founded by the Icelandic intellectuals in Copenhagen and other institutions dealing with Icelandic (Old Nordic) literature and issues concerning Iceland's affairs, were situated in Copenhagen. The University of Copenhagen established a special chair of the Ancient Nordic Language and Culture, which was usually occupied by Icelanders. The Arnamagnaen Institute, based on a collection of old Icelandic manuscripts, became a centre for the research of Icelandic language, culture and history. The institute maintained several Icelandic students as assistants and stipends.

The same was also true of the Society for the Old Nordic Manuscripts founded in 1825 which published scientific editions of classical Nordic and

Icelandic works. The Icelandic Literary Society, founded in 1816, became important in this respect. It published scientific works on Icelandic literature and history and popular education books on various subjects. These institutions and societies sustained a considerable number of Icelandic intellectuals in Copenhagen which was the political centre of Icelandic affairs as well. This "colony" of Icelandic intellectuals became of strategic importance for the national and political mobilization in Iceland.

The University register shows that during the 18th century, 288 Icelanders studied at the University for longer or shorter periods, and slightly over two-thirds of these returned to Iceland following the completion of their studies. About half of these became clergymen (B. Jonsson 1949). 90 Icelandic students earned degrees in theology and 44 in law (H. Þorsteinsson 1907-10: 16; K. Jónsson 1910:14).

The first medical office in Iceland, that of a chief physician, was established in 1760, and in 1800 there were six offices of district physicians. Only two Icelanders received the formal Degree of Medicine at the University during the 18th century, which meant that the positions were filled by Danes (Blöndal and Jónsson 1944: 35).

In the 18th century there was no clear differentiation between these professions in Iceland. All men of letters were, at least, potential servants of the Church. It was usual that academics, e.g. the principal of the Cathedral schools, upon leaving office could choose between church or civil positions.

Several university graduates were somewhat knowledgeable in the medical sciences of their time, and they were often turned to for advice and help. It was especially true of clergymen and the practice seems to have continued in the 19th century due to inadequate official health services (see discussion of this in the Chapter 4.5).

During the 19th century, 435 Icelandic students were registered at the University of Copenhagen (B. Jónsson 1949). This is about 40 percent of all graduates in Iceland during this period and is a rather high figure considering the poor economic status of the country and the distance involved. The privileges that the Icelandic students enjoyed at the university account for this.⁵

Tables 3.3 and 3.4 show that for the period 1801-1850, the proportions of those entering the service of the Church and the secular administration did not change much compared to the previous century; about half of those who returned went into church service (with or without degree). An increase in the number of lawyers is noted when compared to the previous century. Since 1850, a considerable change is noted in the number of candidates with degrees who entered the service of the Church in Iceland. For the period 1851-1880, only 9 percent entered church work, whereas for the period 1801-1850, the figure is 40 percent. This trend was maintained for the period 1881-1900. The change was the result of the foundation of the Theological Seminary in Reykjavík. (The figures in Table 3.3 are absolute figures).

Table 3.3 Icelandic Students Registered at the University of Copenhagen from 1801-1900, According to their Main Discipline of Study.
(Those completing their studies and those returning to Iceland)

	1801-1850			1851-1880			1881-1900		
Main subject	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
Theology	55	33	25	10	5	4	13	10	7
Law	59	44	29	46	36	29	74	47	38
Humanities	11	5	4	15	8	4	26	10	5
Engineering/ mathematics	1	-	-	2	-	-	14	8	7
Natural Sc	1	-	-	2	-	-	5	3	3
Medicine	14	6	4	17	10	5	38	23	13
Economic/ politic Sc	-	-	-	4	2	1	5	1	1
Philosophy	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	2	2
other	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	1
No inform.	6			10			2		
	147	88	62	107	61	43	181	105	77

A = Registered

B = Received (final) degree

C = Returned to Iceland with (final) degree

Source: based on B. Jónsson 1949

Table 3.4 Icelandic Students Registered at the University of Copenhagen 1801-1900 who did not Complete their Studies (absolute figures)

	1801-1850	1851-1880	1881-1900
Died during studies.....	17	4	8
Did not return to Iceland.....	13	10	18
Returned to become clergymen....	22	10	8
Returned, not clergy.....	7	22	42
Total without final degree.....	59	46	76
Percent of all registered.....	40%	43%	42%

Source: based on B. Jónsson 1949

Of those who did not receive a degree in theology but, nevertheless became clergymen within the Church, the figures are higher during the first half of the century as Table 3.4 indicates. During the first period those who returned home without a degree could become clergymen on the basis of their Latin school degree (from the School of Bessastaðir). Following 1847, all students had to complete the programme at the Theological Seminary in order to become ordained. Several of those who became clergymen without a degree had studied other subjects than theology at the university. Of the 22 university students entering church work without degrees from 1800-1850, 6 had studied other subjects than theology.

Tables 3.3 and 3.4 show that 52 percent of all who had studied at the university from 1801-1850 and returned (both with and without degree), became engaged in the Church. These figures for the following periods are 19 and 12 percent.

Table 3.5 shows that practically the entire clergy in the later half of the 19th century was educated at the Theological Seminary; only 10 out of 257 theologians that graduated during this period were candidates from the University of Copenhagen. The top leadership of the Church, the bishops and the teachers at the Theological Seminary still were graduates of the university throughout the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th. In 1938, a new bishop was appointed who had not received a theological degree from the University of Copenhagen but from the Department of Theology of the University of Iceland. In 1930 only one out of the three Professors of Theology of the University of Iceland was a graduate of Copenhagen.

Table 3.3 shows that about half of the returning university graduates during the period 1801-1850 were lawyers, two-thirds during the period 1851-1880 and again about half from 1881-1900. This was nearly sufficient to fill the 20 offices of district sheriffs in Iceland and justices of the court in Reykjavík. Several Danes served as district sheriffs in Iceland during the first half of the century and the Governor General was usually a Dane.

In the latter half of the century, Alþing several times recommended and agreed upon bills intent on establishing a law school in Iceland. The Danish Government was not prepared to grant this request, and it was not until 1907 that an Icelandic law school was founded which, together with the Theological Seminary and the Medical School, constituted the University of Iceland in Reykjavík 1911.

During the first half of the 19th century, 14 Icelandic students were registered in Copenhagen as medical students of which only 6 passed the examination. Of these, only 4 returned to Iceland to practice medicine. There were, therefore, Danes who served as physicians in Iceland in spite of which the six offices of District Physicians were not always occupied. In the 1860s the chief physician started teaching students and 13 physicians graduated from his "private school" before the Medical School was established in Reykjavík 1876. The medical service did not improve significantly until after 1880, since only 5 medical graduates from Copenhagen returned to Iceland during 1851-1880.⁶

Table 3.5 Icelandic Theologians, Lawyers and Physicians by Fathers' Occupation 1850-1940

Occupation of Father	1850-1900			1901-1920			1921-1940		
	Theol	Law	Phys	Theol	Law	Phys	Theol	Law	Phys
Farmer	45	15	30	43	40	37	49	29	34
Clergyman	34	18	27	31	16	20	14	7	10
Jur official ¹	7	42	18	2	8	3	-	16	2
Other academics	2	2	7	-	5	8	-	7	11
Teachers ²	1	-	1	3	2	2	2	1	4
Merchants/clerks	4	16	10	6	22	14	14	26	17
Craftsmen/captains	5	7	6	5	5	8	10	11	17
Workers/fishermen	2	-	1	10	2	8	11	3	5
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total	257 ³	60	73	62	60	76	80	135	145
Thereof from Univ of Copen.	10	60	25	6	38	19	1	0	4

1) a few fief-holders of Crown-land are included in this category for the first period.

2) a few writers are included here.

3) The Theological Seminary in Rvík started in 1847. The first 6 candidates graduated in 1849. These are included in this figure.

Source: Based on B. Jónsson 1949; J. Kristjánsson 1910; B. Magnússon 1976; Blöndal and Jónsson 1944; A. K. Jónsson 1963

The basis for the development of the medical services since the 1880s in Iceland was the candidates from the new Medical School in Reykjavík. In the latter half of the 19th century, 48 physician were educated in the country, most of them during the two last decades.

The education of humanists while low in figures was enough to fill the few positions at the Latin school in Iceland. Only 8 humanists returning received their degree from the university during the period 1800-1830. Of the humanities teachers, not all had acquired degrees (some were theolo-

gians). Many of those who contributed most to the scientific research and development of these fields had not completed university degrees. Prior to 1880, no Icelfander completed a degree in the natural sciences or engineering. The same is true of philosophy. Only two Icelandic students graduated in Economics during this same period.

Table 3.5 indicates that after 1920, practically all theologians, lawyers and physicians in Iceland were candidates from the University of Iceland. This was due to a 1913 Icelandic law which determined that only those with degrees from the University of Iceland were eligible for a professional office within the Church and the civil sector. Several students nevertheless continued at the University of Copenhagen until 1918, since the old privileges of the Icelandic students were still in effect. During the years 1901-1918, 170 Icelandic students were registered at the University of Copenhagen but only 60 of these finished their studies, due mainly to the new regulations. Copenhagen continued to be an important educational centre only for the small group studying natural sciences and engineering. This meant that historical ties between the University of Copenhagen and the intellectual stratum of Iceland were cut off. Iceland was now becoming more independent in both cultural and ideological matters. After the turn of the century, intellectual and theological impulses were sought for in more than one direction.

3.4 THE CLERGY AND THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The clergy was by far the largest group of officials throughout the 19th century. Up to the middle of the century there were about 180 benefices and several parish pastors kept assistants who were ordained and qualified for ordinary office. In 1900 the number of clergymen had decreased to 140.

The country was divided into approx. 20 administrative districts (sýslur), each directed by a sheriff (sýslumaður), usually with a law degree from the University of Copenhagen. There were also the office of the Governor General (stiftamtmaður) and two or three regional Governors (amtmaður) and three justices at the central court in Reykjavík. The Latin school and the Theological Seminary did not maintain more than 10 regular offices. This structure did not change in any significant respect during the 19th century.

Thus, at the end of the century, for each civil official of higher rank there were about 2 clergymen whereas, at the beginning of the century there were about 7 clergymen to one civil official. Following the 1870s, the number of physicians increased greatly. Table 3.6 shows that during the middle of the century they numbered about five or six but increased by about ten fold by the end of the century.

This trend was intensified during the first decades of the 20th century. The health service was extended and modernized, hospitals were built and more medical offices established. Table 3.5 shows that in the period 1901-1920, the number of theologians and physicians remained about the same. For the next two decades, however, this changed drastically with almost twice as many physicians as theologians graduating. In 1930, the

physicians outnumbered the clergy by 100 to 120 (see Table 3.6).

Table 3.6 Clergymen and Physicians in Iceland 1800-1930

	1805	1830	1860	1870	1890	1900	1917	1930
Benefices	187	183	174	172	144	142	125	110
Parish pastors	181	177	162	146	139	140	116	100
Assistants	30	28	7	4	3	4	2	-
Medical								
Districts	6	6	9	11	20	42	46	48
Physicians	5	3	6	11	30	47	65	120
Inhabitants per clergyman:	200	250	400	450	500	550	775	1080
Inhabitants per physician:	9200	18000	11000	6400	2400	1600	1400	900

Main sources: H. Hugason 1983; Statistics of Iceland 1976; Skýr um landsh V; Starfskrá Islands 1917; V lj 1899, 11; Kbl II, 2 1892; Blöndal and Jónsson 1944; M. Jónsson 1958; V. Guðmundsson 1902 ; S. Nielsson 1949-1951; Alpt 1935.

In the beginning of the 20th century the political and administrative centre of Iceland was moved from Copenhagen to Reykjavik, (Chapter 2.4). Modernization, increases in the service sector and social differentiation in general, called for more legal and administrative functionaries. Table 3.5 shows the increase in the number of law graduates. In the period 1901-1920, there were 60 law candidates, similar to the number of candidates in theology for the same period, but in the next two decades the former more than doubled: 135 as compared to 80 theologians. All 135 lawyers were educated in Iceland at the University in Reykjavik.

Table 3.5 shows that for the period 1850-1900, 34 percent of the theological candidates (both from the Theological Seminary in Reykjavik and at the University of Copenhagen) were sons of clergymen. This is roughly the same internal recruitment as in Norway during the same period (37.4 for the period 1850-1869 and 20.9 for the period 1870-1889). The internal recruitment was about the same in Iceland for the first two decades of the 20th century, or 31 percent, but decreased between 1921-1940 to 14 percent. A similar but earlier trend is observed in Norway. In 1910-1929 it was 13.8 percent and in 1930-1939 it was 3.4 percent (Mathiesen and Hauglin 1974: 237).

Table 3.5 shows that theologians, more than any other professionals, came from the class of farmers. For all periods, between 40 and 50 percent were sons of farmers and with no signs of a downward tendency in the latest period. In 1850-1900, 45 percent of all theological candidates came from the farming class in Iceland as compared to about 10 percent in Norway (2.1 percent for the period 1850-1869 and 18.5 percent for the period 1870-1889). From 1910-1930 the figure was 25.7 percent for Norway and about 45 percent for Iceland (Mathiesen and Hauglin 1974: 237) Comparable figures for Sweden show that more of the Swedish clergy came from farming, especially in the early part of the period, than did the Norwegian, but considerably less than the Icelanders (the figures for Sweden have been systematized by A. Bäckström 1983: 39).

Considering that a majority of the clergy still lived in rural areas in 1930, and therefore can be counted among the rural social groups, we see that a majority of the theologians even in the first four decades of the 20th century came from rural areas. Thus, a large majority of the clergy, for the whole period of our study were integrated with the farming sector. They both grew up in these areas and returned to them after completing their studies to a greater extent than did the other groups of professionals and civil servants.

The above investigation indicates that despite the decrease in number as we move into the 20th century, the clergy was close to the people, i.e. they were the officials the population was most likely to be in frequent contact with. In comparing the relative number of clergy in Iceland with some other Nordic countries, Iceland stands out in this respect.

Table 3.7 Number of Inhabitants per Clergyman in Iceland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway

Sweden	Iceland	Norway	Denmark
	1805: 200	1815: 2200	
	1830: 250	1844: 3300	
1855: 1270	1860: 400	1864: 3000	
1870: 1660	1870: 450		
		1895: 3000	
1900: 1900	1900: 500		
	1917: 775	1919: 4100	
1920: 2280			1923: 2200
1930: 2360	1930: 1080	1930: 3800	
			1940: 2300

(Sources: Mathiesen and Hauglin 1974:233; P. Nedergaard 1923; P. Nedergaard 1943:379-380; S. Carlsson 1966: 110f)

Table 3.7 shows an average of about 200 individuals per clergyman in Iceland in the beginning of the 19th century and that the number increased steadily to about 1080 per clergyman in 1930, an increase of about five times.

Compared with the other Nordic countries the relative number of clergy in Iceland is exceptionally high; about ten times as many as in Norway in the beginning of the 19th century, and about three times as many as in Sweden at the middle of the century. The relative number of clergymen decreased more rapidly in Iceland than in the other countries, yet, by 1930, there are about four times as many in Iceland as in Norway. and little more than two times that in Sweden and Denmark.

3.5 THE CLERGY'S SOURCE OF INCOME

The clergy's source of income was completely based on the farming economy - the farming land, rental of church land and various fees and taxes from farmers usually in natura.

Most benefices included a vicarage, a residential farm for the parish pastor, which he would use as his own (fief) while in office. The local churches also owned some farming land within the benefice and the pastor received the land rent. A few of the benefices did not include any significant landed property.

In some of the more prosperous benefices, special economic privileges were connected to the clergyman's source of income. These were based on special natural conditions of prosperity of the area which belonged to the benefice such as fishing, eider-down, collection of driftwood, etc. The pastor was responsible for the maintenance of the church house in connection with the vicarage. The parishioner paid a tax to the Church (a part of the tithe) and the pastor was the recipient of this income. If the maintenance of the parish church was lower in cost than the received income for this purpose, the net profit was the pastor's. In some cases the church buildings were situated on privately owned farms. These churches were called "farmer-churches", but were subject to the supervision of the local pastor and Dean. In these cases the private church owner would receive the parishioner's taxes for its maintenance on the same terms as the pastor.

The ancient clergyman's tithe, was still in force during the 19th century, but had been changed through different regulations, especially the Royal Decree of 1782 on the income of the clergy. Other ancient taxes received by the clergy from the farmers included the "feeding of one lamb" or a horse-load of hay.

Offur was also one of the old taxes received by the clergy. Originally it was a sacrifice given freely by the officials and the more wealthy of the parishioner on special occasions during the church year, but later it was regulated by law and related to the economic situation of the donor. The clergy was also paid for their services; marriages, burials etc. (For the presentation of the clergy's sources of income the author has relied on J. Pétursson 1863: 197-250; Lovs f Isl IV: 664-670).

The land registeres of the benefices show the different portions comprising the economic position of the clergy. The register of the benefices from 1854 (brauðamat) reveals that between 15 and 30 percent of the pastors income came from the vicarage. This income was relatively lower for the better benefices since the rental of church land and other income sources served as the basis of their prosperity. For the six richest benefices, only an estimated 5-7 percent of the total income came from the vicarage.

The difference between the richer and the poorer benefices was generally not so much due to the quality of the vicarage or the taxes and the fees paid by the parishioner; rather, the most significant factor creating this difference was the property within the respective benefices, for which the pastors received rental (based on the register appearing in *Skýr um landsh II*). Thus the uneven economic position of the clergy throughout the 19th century is to be explained by the position of the Church as landowner.

Until the appearance of candidates from the Theological Seminary in Iceland, the theological candidates from Copenhagen had first priority to the richest benefices. Years of faithful service was also an attribute which gave priority. The richest benefices were formally assigned by the King and the others by the Governor General, usually after consultation with the Bishop. And though the Bishop had little formal authority in these matters, he "de facto" could have considerable influence. A new law was passed in 1886 granting the parishioners the right to elect the clergyman. They could choose between three candidates decided upon by the authorities. In 1907 the parishioner got the right to choose between all applicants (see discussion of this in Chapter 6.6.1).

It goes without saying that the economic position of the clergy in general was dependent on the farming conditions in the country. The vicarage was affected in the same way as were other farms in bad years, and for the clergy this was a significant source of living. Land rentals and benefits diminished in years of poor farming. The clergymen collected these payments themselves and it was up to them to see to it that all was paid. It was maintained that the actual income was lower because of the reluctance of some parish members to pay and the lenience of the clergymen when it came to collecting the taxes. They sometimes choose to live in peace with their parishioner rather than force the collection of fees (see, e.g. *Fjölur VII* 1844: 15; P. E. Ólason 1920: 14-23;).

The hardships and economic difficulties at the end of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th century were a strain on the clergy's means of livelihood. This was observed not only by the clergymen themselves and their spokesmen but also by the authorities and by visitors to the country. It was often mentioned that the majority of the clergymen lived economically below their expected position as Church officials and that most worked, themselves, as peasants on their own farms (Mackenzie 1811: 291, 328f; Browne 1946: 215-222; K. Janson 1946: 250f; J. Leclercq 1946: 274; W. Paijkull 1939: 68f).⁷

Little was done to increase the general poor economic standard of the clergymen. It was not considered possible to increase the taxes and the fees of the farming population. The idea of decreasing the number of clergymen in order to improve the economic standard of those remaining (by consolidating the poorer and less populated benefices) was usually opposed by the Church authorities. It was pointed out that this would make it impossible for the clergy to carry out their duties, for instance the pastoral visitations and the supervision of the primary education in a country so sparsely populated and difficult to travel in. It was also pointed out that the only real way to improve the economic conditions of the clergy was through a general upgrading of farming within the country, a task which should be the joint undertaking of the clergy and the farmers.

In the late 1870s, the attitudes of the Church leadership and several clergymen changed in favour of the idea of combining some of the benefices and thus decreasing the number of clergy. The motivation was that this was the only possible way to improve their economic standard. It was also mentioned that several of the poorest benefices had been vacant for many years and that it was increasingly difficult to obtain qualified candidates for the poorer offices. In fact, several combinations of the poorest benefices had already taken place.

In 1879, Alping passed a bill decreasing the number of benefices from 170 to 141. These laws were authorized by the Danish government in 1880, and the consolidation process was to be successive as positions became vacant. Similar motivations lay behind the decision of Alping in 1907 to successively decrease the number of benefices further to 105. This decision was supported by leading clergymen (Kirkjut I, 1878: 1-19 and 44-93; Þ. Böðvarsson 1879b: 15-25; M. Jónsson 1952:12-16 and 74-75).

Both the local people and the farmer's spokesmen vigorously opposed the consolidations, wanting to maintain the territorial boundaries of their parishes and to keep their own local pastor. The presence of the clergy and the vicarage was obviously a part of the identity and traditions of the local communities and the various services of the clergy were considered of vital importance for the farmers (see for instance: Þjóð XV, 1-2 5/11 1862; *ibid* XXVI, 10-11 7/1 1874; Norðri IX, 3-4 12/3 and 5-6 23/3 1861; Norðanf XV, 19-20 1876).

Farming was even more important for the clergymen than indicated by the official income figures. The figures are based on the estimated land rent that the pastor would have to pay if he had rented the vicarage and therefore do not reveal that the farm provided his household with most of the necessities which otherwise would have been purchased elsewhere. In order to cultivate their farms the clergy had to rely more than other farmers on workers and servants, partly because their farms were larger and partly because some of their time was taken up by their official duties. This is indicated in Table 3.8 which shows that the clergy maintained more farm workers and domestic servants than other farmers and higher civil officials.

Table 3.8 Farm Workers and Servants per Clergyman, Higher Civil Official and Farmer

	1860	1870	1880	1890
Clergy	5.6	6.1	5.1	4.4
Higher Civil Official	4.7	4.2	3.5	1.9
Farmer	1.8	2.0	2.1	1.9

Source: Stjt 1884 C: 51 and 1893 C: 56.

The district sheriffs depended less on farming than did the clergy. Since the 1870s, they were payed directly as officials of the state. It was often stated that the economic status of the average clergyman was considerably lower than that of the sheriffs (see, e.g. Fjölnir II, 1835: 51; K. Jónsson 1910: 15).

The Bishop and the teachers at the Theological Seminary were the only ones among the clergy to get payed directly from the state treasury (since 1874 by the National treasury). The bishop was the second highest payed official of the country. In 1875 he had an annual base income of 7000 crowns, the National Governor had 8000 crowns. The sheriffs had base salaries of between 2000 and 3500 crowns. It was estimated according to the vicarage register of 1884 that the average income of the clergy was 1300 crowns (Launalög og launaviðbætur 1887: 11-19). But even if the income differences within the clergy had decreased somewhat since the middle of the century because of the consolidation of benefices, considerable differences in the economic status remained; a large group of the clergy having less than 1000 crowns and a few having more than 2000 crowns.

Following the 1880s, and related to the development of the fishing sector which demanded more labour, the salaries of the farm workers and servants increased considerably. The farmers complained often that farming was less profitable than previously when there was a surplus of cheap labour force in rural areas. In fact, since the middle of the 1890s, farming operated by hired labour was not profitable (H. S. Kjartansson 1977: 250). This situation is likely to have affected the vicarage more negatively than the average farmer because the former was more dependent on farm workers than were ordinary farmers.

In 1907 and 1909, Alþing agreed upon new legislation concerning the organization of the Church (see Chapter 6.6.4), which, among other things, altered completely the basis of the clergy's income. Accordingly, all clergymen would have the same salaries and the parish councils were responsible for the collection of the various taxes and fees for the pastor. Much of the church land was to be sold and a special fund was to be established to equal out the salaries. In 1909 all the old taxes and fees were abolished and instead, a fixed personal tax was established. In 1919 and 1921 the fund was combined with the National Treasury and the clergy was payed directly by the state as were other officials. (M. Jónsson 1952:

76-78 and 99-100; Tillögur um kirkjumál 1906:83-121).

3.6 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Up to the middle of the 19th century practically all Icelandic intellectuals were potential servants of the Church since all Latin School graduates had the right to be ordained as clergymen. This changed with the establishment of the two-year Theological Seminary in Reykjavík in 1847, the first institution of higher education for Icelandic officials. Thus, the internalization of ecclesiastical education was achieved before the internalization of other professional education. The Medical School was not established until 1876 and the Law school in 1907.

About 60 percent of the total number of graduates during the first half of the 19th century became ministers of the Church in Iceland whereas the figure for the latter half is 40 percent and for the first three decades of the 20th century, 12 percent.

Of those who had been registered at the University of Copenhagen in the first half of the 19th century and returned home, 52 percent entered into the service of the Church. From 1851-1880 the figure was 19 percent and 12 percent from 1881-1900.

These figures show that the clergy were still a considerable part of the intellectual stratum in Iceland during the latter half of the 19th century even if its proportion had decreased compared to the first half of the century. In the 20th century the clergy maintained only a peripheral status compared to the plurality of other professions and scientific disciplines. Also indicated was that the links between the Icelandic clergy and the University of Copenhagen were becoming weaker towards the end of the 19th century and practically cut off in the first two decades of the 20th century.

Throughout the 19th century the clergy comprised by far the largest category of officials but their absolute number declined from 200 in 1830 to about 100 in 1930. Due, however, to the great increase in the population, the decline was larger in relative figures.

The clergy were a very heterogeneous group in the first half of the 19th century both educationally and economically. The largest group was comprised of those who had graduated from the internal Latin school whose main task was to provide the Church with officials. However, a considerable group had been educated entirely by private teachers, usually clergymen, who were candidates from the University of Copenhagen. Only a small group of clergymen had completed a theological degree from the university and these were awarded the more prosperous benefices and top positions within the Church. As we move to the turn of the century these differences leveled off. In the 1930s, the top leadership was comprised almost entirely by candidates from the Faculty of Theology of the University of Iceland founded in 1911. This was an indication that the intellectual links between the Church in Iceland and the University of Copenhagen were broken.

The theological educational standard of the clergy in 19th century Iceland was considerably below that of the clergy of the other Nordic countries who, as a rule, were academically trained.

The income system of the Icelandic clergy was similar to that of the clergy in the other Nordic countries in the 19th century and there existed considerable income differences between various categories within the ecclesiastical structure but it seems safe to say that the majority of the Icelandic clergy were of a lower economic standard than their Nordic colleagues.⁸ A majority of the clergy were economically similar to the better-to-do farmers, and one must keep in mind the low economic position of the Icelandic farmers in general and the absence of a land-owning aristocracy in Iceland in this context.

The relatively high number of clergymen in Iceland compared to the other Nordic countries and their rural backgrounds would indicate the "closeness" of the clergy as a social group to the basic socio-economic stratum in 19th century Iceland, i.e. the farmers.

Thus, we could say that, whereas the majority of the Icelandic clergy was to a lesser degree theological experts in the beginning of the period of this study, they were socially and economically closer to the farming culture and way of life than was true of their counterparts in the other Nordic countries.

Notes to Chapter 3.

1. In 1772, a printing press was established in Iceland which was not directly under the control of the bishops.
2. In the Icelandic literature this school is always referred to as the "Bessastaðir School" because of its special role within the educational system and contribution to the cultural life of Iceland; this will be followed here.
3. The authority of the Bishop and the Governor which they executed conjointly in educational matters and several administrative undertakings were referred to as the "Stifts-authority". "Stift" refers to Iceland as a separate administrative unit and a special diocese as well.
4. It has been pointed out that P. Guðmundsson is not quite reliable as a source. It has been shown, however, in comparing his register of students at Bessastaðir with the official school register, he is wrong in only 4 out of 255 cases. His list includes 254 individuals (H. Hugason 1983: 134). Guðmundsson's list of candidates of private tutors is the only existing one for the entire period. Another list for the period 1818-1833 has appeared in an essay in pjóð 1858-59 (Bókmentir og skólamentun), which does mention the total number but not all the names. For this period, Guðmundsson includes more privately tutored graduates than the other source (77 as opposed to

71). With these reservations it seems warranted to use Guðmundsson's register for the purpose of this study.

5. These privileges tempted some Danish students with quite distant relations with Iceland to pass as Icelanders in order to get a share of these privileges. Therefore the actual figure is somewhat lower. These were either sons of Danish officials and merchants who were born in Iceland, or they were of Icelandic descent but born and raised in Denmark. The group composed 20-40 individuals, depending on how strict a definition of nationality one uses. These are included in the calculations.
6. Some of those who did not complete their medical degree at the university and returned to Iceland nevertheless received the right to practice medicine. They are therefore included in the list of physicians which constitute the source for the calculations in Table 3.5.
7. Inflation resulted in the deterioration of the value of some of the taxes and the fees. The Royal decree of 1782 regarding the pastors' income had determined monetary prices even if these taxes were paid in natura. The situation was not rectified until the 1840s (see Jóhannesson p 1950: 334-335; Lofs f Isl, XI: 249f; *ibid* XIII: 323f). Inflation did not affect them as it did the poor since this was only a minor part of the income of the clergy holding positions in the better benefices.
8. This conclusion is based on various observations. For instance the descriptions of foreign visitors during the first half of the 19th century. Figures on the average annual income of the Danish and Icelandic benefices at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century indicate this as well. (B. Kornerup 1951:479; Skýr um landsh II: 846-851; See also Á. Ásgeirsson 1925: 90-93, 114-119).

4. Clergy and Religious Institutions on the Local Level

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In one way or another, secularization theories assume that religious legitimations and the church as an institution have lost their previous position regarding the basic functions of society. In this chapter we will be concerned with how the religious institutions and, particularly the clergy, have in various ways been related to social order maintenance, and how these relations have changed since the early 19th century. Further, we will deal with religious socialization and try to pinpoint how it was integrated as a means of social control in the traditional farming society as well as alterations of these aspects throughout the period of study. The main processes investigated here include religious socialization (within the home and in primary education) and social control (local administration and the labour force). Control over primary education is perhaps the most important factor in the socialization process. Exactly how this sphere was transferred from the control of the church to that of the secular sphere is therefore a crucial undertaking of this chapter. This transfer process is bound to reveal some of the basic characteristics of the secularization process.

Changes in peoples religious beliefs and practices will only be dealt with superficially owing to the fact that empirical data on this subject is sparse, and the reliability of it difficult to ascertain.

4.2 RELIGIOUS SOCIALIZATION

The patriarchal order of the traditional farming society was legitimated by the ideological framework of the official religion, most obviously visible in Martin Luther's Minor Catechism. This book provided the basis for the religious socialization of the people, the preaching of the clergy and the pre-confirmation instruction of the children. Its social philosophy was based on the presupposition that there existed three ruling strata to which the common people were to submit themselves: the Crown, the clergy and the master of the household. The social order based on this principle of authority was in the end determined by God, and any violation of this was sin and would be sanctioned by the proper authorities.¹

In traditional Icelandic society the role of the master of the household was most important. The social order rested on this position which received its legitimation through the official theology. The significance of this position was symbolically expressed in the official

church service. Through out the 19th century it was a more or less commonly observed practice for those farmers who were independent and relatively well off to sit in the chancel. This hierarchical order was determined according to the individual's prestige within the community; the leading men (often the commune director and the parish elder) were seated closest to the altar. The other men and women sat mid-way in the sanctuary (the women on the one side and the men on the other), women according to the prestige of their husbands while others either stood or sat in the front or above during the regular Sunday services. The same applied for the custom of presenting to the congregation the women who had recently given birth. This privilege was granted only to legally married women, i.e. the wife of the master of the household. This custom was maintained more or less until the beginning of the 20th century.²

About the middle of the 18th century several rules and regulations concerning education and church matters were issued by the Crown as a result of a general investigation of the situation in Iceland. These acts, which remained in force into the 19th and some into the 20th centuries emphasized some aspects of the old order while adding some new. The following presentation takes as its starting point these acts as they are crucial for the understanding of the social order and of socialization in the beginning of the 19th century.³

4.2.1 The Household

The household served as a cornerstone of the social order of the farming society. As such, it was mostly self-supporting and a basic unit of production in the undeveloped economy of the 19th century (as described in Chapter 2). The normal means of education was "home-education", there being no primary schools, and the labour force, comprising the workers and servants, was an integral part of the household. It was the duty of the local pastor to visit each household at least twice yearly. The purpose of this visitation was twofold: to check up on the religious education and to supervise the domestic discipline. It was the duty of the parish pastor to maintain knowledge of each household and all members in the household. Each individual had the right to privately consult the pastor during these visitations concerning personal matters and relations with other members of the household. The moral standard of each household was a part of pastoral care and the pastor was to use his influence and authority to improve the discipline and spiritual well-being of the people. In order to carry out his task, it was essential for the pastor, according to the Royal decrees, to establish an environment of mutual respect and trust with his parishioners.

The implementation of the above mentioned regulations placed great emphasis on the literacy of the youth as a prerequisite for religious education. This was, of course, in line with the Protestant policy of evangelization. When the child reached 5 to 7 years of age, it was the responsibility of the parents or other guardians to initiate the reading process, and it was the duty of the pastor to see that this was indeed

carried out. In case the parents themselves were illiterate, they were obliged to hire a capable servant to instruct the children. Religious books were to be found in all homes and were to be read during the winter months. Daily readings of certain authorized religious texts suggested by the pastor were to take place. Should such books be lacking, the head of the household was instructed to purchase one and in the case of excessive poverty, the household was to be provided with such texts by one of the parish's wealthier members or through the poor-relief services. Luther's Minor Catechism comprised the basic religious texts for the parish children and adults as well. It was published many times and in the 19th century was invariably included in the official text book for the teaching of the Christian religion prior to confirmation (Kverið). In the 19th century it was published in Icelandic 42 times, and during the first quarter of the 20th century, 8 times (S. Sivertsen 1925: 121-122). Each child was required to more or less memorize the book completely along with some prayers and hymns.

As mentioned, it was the duty of the clergy to ensure that the household masters followed the rules fully. In order to do so, the pastor interrogated the children and servants, recording their educational progress in the parish register along with other remarks regarding the education standard and personal character of each household member. Also included in the register was a list of which religious books the household possessed. Should the parents neglect to fulfill their duties properly, they were to be reprimanded by the pastor and upon repeated negligence, he could determine to remove the child to another household, "a Christian home of a decent farmer", where the child would get the prescribed education. The expenses for such measures were paid for by the child's parents or by the poor-relief fund.

It was originally intended that interrogations or hearings were to take place in the presence of the parishioners after the regular Sunday services in the local parish (Løvs f Isl I: 218f). It appears, however, that they were never held there on a regular basis in Iceland despite efforts by the Danish authorities to reinforce regulations regarding their validity (Løvs f Isl II: 518f). Furthermore, to the extent that it was carried out, the practice in Iceland was limited to the Lent period. It became less frequent towards the latter half of the 19th century and was nearly abandoned by the turn of the century (see J. Pétursson 1863: 101 and 1890: 107; G. Vigfusson 1918: 60; H. Einarsson 1892: 51). It would appear that the role of the household in religious socialization was greater in Iceland than in the other Nordic countries. In the other countries, as a general rule, the pastor did not visit each household individually for the purpose of conducting hearings; rather, several households gathered together in the home of a well off parish family, or, as in the 19th century, the meetings were conducted in the local church or school (for Sweden see H. Pleijel 1965: 90 ff. and B. Gustafsson 1950: 212).

The reasons for the difference were merely practical. As indicated in Chapter 3.4, the Icelandic pastors had fewer parishioners to attend to and, thus, could more easily carry out visitation on a household basis. This

method was not practically conceivable for many of the Danish and Swedish parish pastors. It was easier for them to reach their parishioners many at a time in the villages. In Iceland which was more sparsely populated, the farm became a separate social and cultural unit. Travel during the long winter months was often difficult or impossible which resulted in lower church attendance. Besides, regular Sunday services were not held in all churches owing to the fact that about half of the clergy served more than one parish (a parish being defined by the households attending the same church). Conjointly, these factors rendered the individual households the central unit of socialization and the transmitter of social values and religious tradition.

We will now turn to a more detailed investigation of how these tasks were accomplished by the households, particularly with respect to the religious socialization.

4.2.2 Cultural Transmission of the Religious Values

Even with the increased secular print by the end of the 18th century, the ordinary households did not, as a rule, possess other than religious literature. Popular secular literature existed in paper manuscripts. Little is known of the latter because the pastoral registries did not record the secular literature. The official stipulations contributed to the demand for religious literature. Studies based on parish records and catalogues of inventories at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th show that a household without religious books was the exception, less than 3 percent: (H. Hallgrímsson 1925: 73; S. B. Jensdóttir 1975: 269ff; L. Guttormsson 1981: 160). This is a very low figure compared to Sweden where there was an estimated one religious book (a Catechism or Hymnal) in every fifth or sixth household (H. Pleijel 1965: 140).

In relation to the above-mentioned Royal investigation of the religious and educational situation in Iceland, the Royal Emissary, in the 1740's, investigated the literacy of the population. The results revealed that about half of the northern bishopric was literate, whereas in the southern bishopric, the larger of the two, about one-third of the population was literate (H. Hallgrímsson 1925: 1-50). This situation was considered unacceptable and increasing pressure was put on the clergy not to confirm illiterate children (J. Pétursson 1863: 93ff). This endeavour resulted in an increased level of literacy.

It has been estimated on the basis of parish records that the literacy rate reached 90 percent by the end of the 18th century. The figure seems high, however, in comparison with the other Nordic countries, especially keeping in mind that this was accomplished in a country lacking primary school education (H. Hallgrímsson 1925: 70ff).⁴

From the above discussion of the availability of religious literature and the literacy of the Icelandic population at the turn of the 18th century, we might conclude that the vast majority of the households were capable of maintaining the religious observances according to the official regulations. These were important in a complementary sense to the regular

church services especially during the winter when the weather conditions prevented the church gatherings. In fact, the household devotions, which usually included the reading of a sermon, perhaps something from the Bible, the singing of hymns and prayer, was part of the national custom of the "winter-eve gatherings" (Kvöldvaka). On these occasions the entire household gathered on winter evenings in the largest room (sometimes the only livingroom) of the farmhouse, for various indoor, activities including the telling of stories, folk sagas and fairy tales. Ballads, the so-called rímur, were also recited on these occasions. Narratives of Old Nordic heroes and the Sagas often had a part in the entertainment, mostly in popularized version. They were, for instance, often converted into popular ballads which were memorized. The evenings always ended with the short religious service as described above.⁵

During the first half of the 19th century, secular printed books, including the Old Icelandic literature became more available to the common people and used at these gatherings. This was mainly due to the publication societies based in Copenhagen (H. Hallgrímsson 1925: 75). A good description exists of a winter's eve gathering in the home of a district sheriff, written by a foreign visitor, the Scotsman Ebeneser Henderson, who travelled for nearly two years in Iceland in 1814 and 1815.⁶

...I proceeded to a large room adjoining, which is properly the bedroom of the servant... It gave me peculiar pleasure to be informed, that this apartment also formed the domestic chapel. Here, the whole family, which consists of twenty members, assembles every evening, when a psalm is sung, and, after a chapter of the Bible has been read, an appropriate prayer is presented by the head of the family. Besides this exercise, the Secretary spends an hour or two, in the long winter evenings, in reading to the family, while at work: and, what cannot be sufficiently commended, he has substituted the reading of the historical books of Scripture for that of the Sagas, which was formerly in universal use, and is still kept up by most of the peasants... The Sagas are certainly of great value, and, in the hands of the learned, may be turned to a good account; but to encourage their perusal by the common people, would only be to nourish those seeds of superstition and credulity which they are but too prone to cultivate, and which, in their vegetation, cannot but have a baleful influence on their sentiments and conduct in life." E. Henderson 1818 I: 87-88.

We may assume that this description applies as well to many of the clergymen's households and some of the better-off farmers' throughout the country. These had better access to printed secular books and one member of the household could always be spared to read to the other members. In a previous chapter we stressed the practice of clergymen operating private tutoring in their homes (see Chapter 3.2). In this manner, the institution of the winter's eve contributed to the cultural homogeneity of the nation, by integrating aspects of the popular and intellectual cultures.

Henderson's negative attitude to the folk-saga tradition of the winter's eve reveals a potential conflict between the official theological system and the more folk-religious tradition. This attitude appears also to have been found among some of the leaders of the Icelandic Church since the Reformation (notably Guðbrandur Þorláksson), and was clearly expressed in the above mentioned Royal decrees and resolutions which were partly motivated by the Pietism which was the ruling theology at the Danish court in the middle of the 18th century. These decrees instructed the clergy to speak out against the popular tradition of superstition and entertainment as "degrading for truly Christian people, of dislike to the Holy Spirit", and as "a threat to the work ethic and discipline of the household". Furthermore, a few of the clergy were influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment and of Rationalism at the turn of the 18th century, and its negative attitude towards what was defined as the supernatural ingredients of the folk-sagas and legends of the popular tradition (see S. Mordal 1972:xxii and B. Kornerup 1951: 487f).

The attitude of the Icelandic clergy toward the religious elements of the popular culture is not easily detected because of the lack of historical data. There seems not to have been united confrontation in this matter, nor is there reason to conclude that the majority of the clergy actively tried to abolish the folklore stories and the related popular literature. As pointed out earlier, the clergy were too much a part of the farming culture to protest against these elements, and only a small minority of them had received university theological training. As will be shown in the next chapter, the theology of the Enlightenment did not get a stronghold among the clergy or the common people in Iceland even though it effected the top leadership.⁷

As mentioned above, the clergy were very much integrated with the farming culture. In fact, they lived so close to the farming population and popular customs that definite boundaries between the official theology and the popular supernatural beliefs must have been difficult to maintain. It appears that still in the latter half of the 19th century, elements of both belief systems were to be found in the world-view of the rural people including some of the clergy.⁸

Their task of supervising the religious and moral conduct of each household would have been an impossible undertaking were they to have simply rejected the popular saga traditions and entertainments. They would have, in addition, gone against their own cultural backgrounds. This culture, as expressed vividly by the institution of the winter's eve, was composed of folk-lore beliefs, the saga tradition and the official religious orthodoxy. An entirely different question is whether these elements were integrated on a more conscious level of expression, and we would assume that they were not. The first two phenomena belonged more to the amusement sphere and the third to the "religious sphere" proper as a consequence of the extensive religious socialization of the official model which, at the local level, was controlled by the clergy themselves. Should a clash arise between old folk-lore beliefs and Lutheran orthodoxy, the latter naturally prevailed. In fact, it dominated the religious attitudes

of the Icelanders until the 20th century.

Various sources give the impression that the decline of the traditional household religious services began in the towns and fishing settlements and then spread to the rural areas. Sources exist from the 1870s and onwards which describe the practice as declining (Þjóð XXVIII, 9 1/3 1876; Þ. Ólafsson 1892: 39; J. L. L. Johannsson 1896: 74-77; Kbl VII, 5, 1897; Fjk XII, 4 1/2; ibid XII, 9 26/2 1895; Þ. Bjarnason 1891: 50-52).

The Danish merchants situated on Iceland along with their commissaries and agents did not practice the domestic religious service, at least not in the same manner as the common people in Iceland. Partly as a result of this, they were considered a bad influence on the Icelandic people and their culture (Mackenzie 1811: 269; Henderson 1818 I: 135f and 371-377; V. Briem 1894: 181f). As will be analyzed later in this chapter, the way of life in the fishing settlements and in the towns, particularly Reykjavík, and its influence on the rural people was looked upon as degenerating for the national character and moral values. Some church people spoke of this as an indication of de-christianization (Þ. Ólafsson 1892: 40; V. Briem 1894: 180-182; J. Bjarnason 1899: 20ff). In certain rural areas, by the 1880's, a discontinuation in the use of evening sermons is noticed. The first to disappear was the singing before and after the reading of the sermon followed by the termination of the reading itself. The practice of reading Sunday sermon seems to have lasted longer as did the reading at Lent. By the 1920's, religious services were still held in some rural households, but this was becoming the exception in the towns and fishing settlements (Skólabl I, 22 1907; N kbl 1911, 1; Þ. Þórðarson 1960: 67, ff).

The rural household religious sermons disappeared in the 1930s together with the winters' eve tradition. Much of this is no doubt due to radio broadcasting which operated in Iceland since 1930 (M. Gíslason 1977: 121, 137-139). Sunday services and the reading of the Passium Hymns of Rev. Hallgrímur Petursson (the most popular religious work) during Lent, were broadcast. And by this time the average household was smaller, as shown in Table 4.1. The farm was cared for by the farmer himself and his family due to the labour force having moved to the more specified industries of the towns and the fishing settlements.

Table 4.1 Households in Iceland (including Servants and Farm Workers)

	Number of Individuals Average Household	Households with more than seven members: percent of total population

1860	6.97	
1910	5.78	43.8
1930	5.19	31.3
1950	3.83	13.1

Source: Statistical Abstract of Iceland 1976:34.

The cultural and economic isolation of the rural areas was broken due to improved communications and a more differentiated economic structure. In 1930, upon visiting all the parishes of the land the Bishop noted that the pastoral visitation of households was still maintained in a formal sense but its main function was the taking of the yearly census, a task still in charge of the clergy except in the larger towns. The decreasing importance of the pastoral visitations was already noted at the turn of the century (J. Helgason 1903:198-99; N kbl 1911, 9; N kbl 1910, 7; J. Helgason 1930: 12ff).

4.2.3 Religious Education and the Development of Primary Education

Primary education was conducted entirely within the framework of the household during the first half of the 19th century and to a lesser degree for the remainder of the century. Laws on compulsory school education for children from 10 - 14 years of age first appeared in 1907. Even by this time, many of the children in the rural areas received home training (ambulatory schools) by travelling teachers since school buildings were not available.

Until 1880, the only education demanded by law was reading and the Christian religion, which was to take place before the child reached the age of 14, i.e. prior to confirmation. The parents and the clergy were responsible for the teaching. Typically, the parish pastor would gather the youth together at his home for a few weeks prior to confirmation in the Spring in order to complete the education.

In 1880, mandatory education was extended to include writing and elementary arithmetic. This, too, was under the care of the households and the surveillance of the clergy. It soon became clear however, that the households were incapable of meeting the increasing demands and that it was difficult for the clergy to maintain effective supervision. The number of clergy was gradually decreasing (see Table 3.6) and, at the same time, there were heard demands both locally and nationally (in the press and in the Alþing) for the establishment of publicly supported primary schools. In 1874, there were five primary schools operating in: Reykjavík, Akureyri, Eyrarbakki and two more in expanding fishing settlements. These were very small schools except for the one in Reykjavík, and not all children of the respective town attended since schooling was not mandatory. With the law of 1880, additional schools were established (especially ambulatory schools and travelling teachers were hired). Initially, the efforts were mainly local and public financial support was delayed. The primary task of the schools and travelling teachers⁹ was to seek out the areas where the mandatory education was inadequate. Such areas included especially the towns and fishing settlements where the households were less in a position to meet the requirements. The parish pastor was often the initiator of the schools and cooperated with local authorities in this endeavour. He was also, as a rule, a member of the school board.

Initially, the parish councils were included in this development (see, e.g. V. Briem 1896: 138). The councils were founded according to law mainly

for the purpose of assisting the pastor. Therefore, the supervision of primary education was, at least indirectly, under their care. Furthermore, in many cases it would appear that the decision to establish schools was made in these councils. The communal councils were often involved as well, especially in contributing to teacher's salaries. As will be shown later, the local pastor was often also a member of the communal council which meant that in some cases, issues pertaining to schooling were dealt with by the latter entirely.

According to the education law of 1880, the dean was to inspect the pastoral visitation records which contained written remarks concerning the children's progress in the mandatory subjects. Therefore, the matter of systematic supervision of the teaching and estimation of the children's progress was discussed as well at the council meetings of the district deans. The minutes of the latter indicate that in some of the deaneries, efforts were made to examine the children in the Spring. The examinations were conducted by the local pastor and some members of the local parish council with the results being presented at the deanery council meetings.¹⁰

The functioning of this supervision varied. Most of the councils were inactive at least periodically, and since the regulations concerning this were unclear, interest in the work was inconsistent.

In 1889, Alþing specified certain conditions which were to be met if the primary schools and travelling teachers were to receive governmental financial support. The local government was to cover at least half of the costs with the teacher being employed by the commune, the parish council or the school board if such existed. Instruction in the mandatory disciplines was to be provided. A certificate of progress from the pastor was to be collected and sent together with the application. A committee comprised of the local pastor together with a person elected by the parish council had to be formed to examine the children. It was assumed that the local pastor was the chairman of the school board.¹¹

Thus, the voluntary primary education system was stimulated by official contributions, and in the Winter of 1903-1904, nearly half the children between the ages of 7 and 14 received instruction from a teacher, (G. Finnbogason 1905: 14-15). The same winter, a study revealed that 415 men and women had taught on at least a part-time basis. Of these, only 24 had received teacher training and 134 were so-called "self-taught", i.e. had no formal education except as required for confirmation. The remaining ones had some form of secondary school education (G. Finnbogason 1905: 16-17).

The main discipline of the education curriculum was Christian religion. In school as in the homes the children were supposed to memorize the catechism (G. Finnbogason 1905: 45, 52; Alþ t 1905A: 275; G. M. Magnúss 1939: 212ff). Normally, reading was practiced from the Bible or some other religious book. The investigators often found that the children's style of reading aloud was affected by the traditional recital of the home sermons (G. Finnbogason 1905:51-54). This indicates that, initially, the school education was simply complementary to home education.

When the bill on mandatory public education was first submitted to Alþing by the government in 1905, it was assumed that the school boards

could decide whether or not Christian religion should be included, taking into account the short school year and the opinion of some that the traveling teachers were not qualified to teach the subject (Alpt 1905A: 262). Furthermore, two members of the lower chamber submitted an amendment to the bill, which would have excluded religious education altogether. The amendment caused some disputes but never became an issue. Of the six clergymen who were members of the chamber, two participated in the discussions and opposed it, as they said, at least until the people could express an opinion on the matter. The amendment was defeated by 15 votes to 7 (Alpt 1905B: 1951-1962).

The new laws on primary education which came into effect in 1907 did not automatically assure the clergy seats on the local school boards as before; however, they were frequently elected as members. In 1919, most school boards had clergymen as chairmen (Skólabl. XI, 3 1919). Protests on the part of the clergy concerning the loss of automatic appointment to the committees have not been found in the press and church magazines. The Christian religion was included in the curriculum to the extent as required for confirmation. Thus, confessional education was conducted by the mandatory public schools which was quite clearly the intention of the government (Alpt. 1905 A 261-262). By the time the bill finally passed the Alþing in 1907, permission to drop religious education from the curriculum was granted the school boards. This legal provision seem to have taken place through compromise and documented protests on behalf of the clergy are hard to find probably because the school boards made no use of this provision. By that time there were many who anticipated the separation of state and church (see Chapter 6.6.4) and this provision was most likely intended to facilitate the process. Opposition to mandatory primary school education did not, with few exceptions, come from the clergy. On the contrary, it seems that the clergy supported and actively worked for the extension of the school education. The Clergy Meeting of 1901 passed a resolution to this end. The opposition was primarily located among the farmers who thought the cost would be too high and some intellectuals and politicians who claimed that home education was the basis of the Icelandic national culture which the obligatory schools would eradicate (Alpt 1905B: 1922-1946).

Around the turn of the century a discussion of religious education was initiated in which all seemed to agree that it was needed in some form for the spiritual well-being of the children and their future as good citizens. The main question was how religion should be taught. Opposition was great toward the traditional teaching of the catechism which the children were given at an early age and were to have memorized by the age of fourteen. Even some clergy opposed it on the grounds that it was contrary to modern pedagogy. Others considered it harmful to religious life, leading to an attitude of apathy toward the church. The strongest opponents to the traditional methods usually wanted the catechism replaced by Biblical narratives and a short history of Christianity. In this fashion, dogmatics should be included in the teaching and in a way more easily understood by

the children. Still others preferred the teaching of catechism to be discontinued entirely. (J. Jónason 1890; S. Jónsson 1899-1900; Fjk XIX, 49 16/12 1902; Nkbl 1906, 20; Nkbl 1911, 5; Skólabl III, 15, 1909; ibid X, 10 1916; Nkbl 1912, 19; Nkbl 1913, 20; Vörður I, 12 1918).

Resolutions supporting these ideas were agreed upon several times in official meetings of the clergy (in 1909, 1911, and 1913) as well as in their local meetings. The teachers societies and organizations agreed several times on similar proposals (Skólabl II, 13 1908; Skólabl XIII, 7 1921; Yfirlit yfir helstu störf SIB 1924:5).

Confirmation was considered a central institution or "rites de passage", i.e. the transition from childhood to adulthood, and the parents were anxious to see that the preparation met official requirements (G. M. Magnuss 1939: 215). As stated earlier, most school boards included the local pastor, and even if some of them wanted to change the traditional religious education, it was not likely that they wished to drop all Catechism as a prerequisite for confirmation (see Skólabl XIII, 7 1921; Skólabl XI, 3 1919).

In the autumn of 1915, the local school board in Reykjavik decided that the Catechism should be eliminated from the primary school. In spite of this, however, the traditional teaching of the Catechism was continued in many schools throughout the first two decades of the 20th century (Skólabl XIII, 7 1921; Nkbl 1916, 21). The parents were legally correct in expecting the school to prepare their children for confirmation. The general opinion was also that some catechetical preparation was needed, and it was the opinion of the church that Luther's Catechism Minor, was still authorized by law to be included in preparation for confirmation (Nkbl 1913, 20; Skólabl X, 8 1916).

A solution to this problem had been suggested at the beginning of the century by the educational and church leaders. The schools were to be responsible for the teaching of a short history of the Christian religion and narratives from the Bible, and the clergy were to teach Catechism. This solution was institutionalized in the 1920s. In the new curriculum for the primary schools authorized by law in 1929, only Biblical narratives and Church History were included. Christian religion comprised 5.7 percent of the total primary school lesson hours (S. Pálsson 1977:9 and J. Helgason 1930:22-23).

The development of a special profession of primary school teachers and the institutionalization of the separation of the church and primary school education was characterized by the absence of antagonisms and frictions when compared to other Nordic countries (L. Tegborg 1982: 63-68). A contributing factor to the peaceful process of differentiation and specialization was undoubtedly the way in which the development of teacher training was carried out in Iceland. One of the few secondary schools established in the last two decades of the 19th century was started by the parish pastor of Hafnafjörður. The pastor's son was the principal of the school and an influential person in the construction of modern primary education in Iceland. In 1906, he was appointed the first Governmental

Director of primary school education in Iceland. In 1892, this school offered the first teacher training seminars which were given support from the National Treasury. Practical training in Christian religion education was one of the disciplines offered. Nonetheless, modern teacher training was not provided for until the legislating and founding of a special three-year Teacher Training College in Reykjavik in 1907. The school's first principal was Rev. Magnús Helgason who served from 1907 to 1929, and who formed the policy and spirit of the school from the very beginning, being a strong influence on the first generations of professional primary school teachers in Iceland.

It is maintained that education leaders in Iceland turned to the Rev. Helgason for this leadership position in order to avoid having to choose from among candidates from the University of Copenhagen who were negative toward the church and critical to the teachings of the Christian religion (see Chapter 6.5.3; E. H. Kvaran 1931:xviii). Magnús Helgason received a degree from the Theological Seminary in Reykjavik in 1881, and had been a parish pastor and teacher for several years. He participated enthusiastically in the public discussions concerning the teaching of the Christian religion, and stated on several occasions that this was the most important of all subjects in the primary schools. His policy was to let the schools take care of the basic teachings of Biblical narratives and the history of the Christian religion, with the clergy in charge of the catechism and dogmatics in the manner they thought most proper. In his pedagogical style he was "national". He tried to make the college a home for his pupils who came from all over the country. Every week he set aside a number of hours to be with his pupils in the tradition of the winter's eve gatherings (E. H. Kvaran 1931:xxii). In 1931, the Clergys' Association published a collection of evening sermons held at these occasions. Expressing the national style of Helgason's pedagogics, they were said to be based on three sources: the Icelandic Sagas, folk legends and the Bible. In reviewing the book, his colleague, theologian Ásgeir Ásgeirsson (second president of the Icelandic Republic, 1952-1968) described his character saying that he combined the attributes of the three: the farmer, the clergyman and the teacher (Á. Ásgeirsson 1931:42-44).

Keeping in mind Helgason's lasting influence on the first generation of primary school teachers in Iceland, he was one of the key men at the turn of the century whose task it was to unite old values and beliefs with the modern differentiated society that was developing. Several of the teachers and students of the college were leaders of the National Youth Movement (UMFI) whose political ideology was close to the teachings of Rev. M. Helgason. The younger generation of politicians who founded the Progressive Party in 1916, with its popular base among the farming population was also highly influenced by this ideology.

4.3 SOCIAL CONTROL

The economic prosperity of the rural community depended to a great extent on the organization of labour. The basic unit of labour administration was the household where the workers lived together with the farmer's family. Access to cheap labour was a prerequisite for economic prosperity of the larger farmers. Therefore, the mechanisms of social control functioned to maintain a secure supply of cheap labour. As a rule, the working people were unmarried, but the only means of upward mobility was through access to farm land. Marriage, the foundation of a new household, was thus coupled to access to farming land. The availability of land was, however, limited and the number of farms in Iceland has been surprisingly constant since the settlement period.

The social control of the rural labour force was a vital interest of the pillars of the local community. It was also highly related to the major social problem of the time, the care of the needy, which was a matter for the local authorities.

4.3.1 Communal Administration

Even though the official laws and regulations assumed close cooperation between the civil officials and the clergy in the administration of local affairs (both in religious and civil matters), the two belonged to distinct units of administration. The commune, as a unit of local administration had existed since the time of the Icelandic Commonwealth, with origins in the cooperation of the farms in herding sheep. The main task of the commune was the administration of relief to the poor including the collection and distribution of a part of the tithe for that purpose' (B. Lárusson 1967: 28, 40-41; L. Björnsson 1972: 36). The parish, on the other hand, was composed of those farmers who lived within the proximity of a given church and paid tithes to its maintenance. The benefice was composed of one or more parishes.

The number of communes has remained constant for a long time. In 1703, there were 165, in 1842, there were 168, and in 1872, 172 communes. The increase was mainly due to townships becoming independent administrative units. During the middle of the 19th century the number of communes and benefices was about the same. Since then the number of benefices decreased while the number of communes increased to where, in 1930, there were about 212 communes and 110 benefices. The territorial boundaries of the communes and benefices often did not coincide except when altered through legislative measures. This was done partially out of consideration for cooperation between the pastor and the communal directors. The territorial boundaries of the next level of administration, the district supervised by the sheriff and the deanery, usually coincided.

Since the Reformation, several rules and regulations have assigned the maintenance of law and order to the joint efforts of the civil authorities and the clergy. This tendency was more firmly institutionalized in the 18th century as the communal directors increasingly became linked to the Royal

Administration directly under the sheriffs. The communal directors were, as a rule, appointed by the sheriffs from among the better established local farmers. Nonetheless, they usually did not have the necessary education for the bureaucratic functions they were expected to carry out for the government and, therefore, needed to rely heavily on the help of the clergymen who, in any case, were involved in local affairs. Many of the rules and regulations stated directly that it was the official duty of the clergy to participate in the local administration. On the other hand, the directors were supposed to assist the pastor, in several respects, in maintaining the official religious order.¹²

Until the introduction of the new legislation on local administration in 1872, the local pastor and the communal director were, conjointly, referred to as the "local government" (Sveitarstjórn).

4.3.2 The Labour Force

In the regulations concerning pastoral visitations, which date from the mid-18th century concern for household discipline and the relations between the farmer and his workers was delegated to the pastor (see Chapter 4.2.1). These instructions are dictated in a patriarchal spirit comparable to those of the ethics of Luther's Minor Catechism, i.e. submission to the authority of the master.

According to these regulations, the masters were obliged to keep all household members occupied with meaningful labour and to educate their subordinates, including the children, servants and workers, by being a model in chastity, thriftiness and observance of religious duties. Furthermore, according to the stipulations, the masters were also to demonstrate to their subordinates "how the true fear of God is to be an inspiration in all their daily labour". In general, the relationship of the masters to their servants and workers was to resemble parent-child relations.

The clergy were to pay close attention to the behaviour of the workers towards their superiors. Arrogant and imprudent behaviour on their behalf was not to be tolerated by the household masters. If the admonishment of the pastor towards misconduct such as cursing, drunkenness, usury, insubordination, etc. was ignored, the pastor was obliged to notify the civil authorities who then determined the proper action to be taken which could include fines or physical punishment. When farm servants and workers left one employment for another, a certificate of conduct and personal quality was to be shown the new employer. The certificate to be signed by the parish pastor is an indication of how the authority of the clergymen was expected to be supportive of the patriarchal order of the household.

The social threats to the economic prosperity of the farming community were mainly of two kinds: first, relief for the poor was a heavy burden, and second, maintaining cheap labour in the farming areas was a problem inasmuch as the fishing settlements offered a more independent social position and from time to time better wages. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the farming society tried to eliminate these problems by keeping the labour

force bound to farm production by the one-year contract commitments. The role of the clergy was in several ways both directly and indirectly supportive of the mechanisms of social control maintaining this order. Their socio-economical position made it natural for them to do so. As indicated above, they relied on rural workers in order to operate their vicarage (Chapter 3.5), and they were to contribute to the poor relief as did the other farmers of the community.

Linked in a special way to the above mentioned threats was the marriage of the "poor people", i.e. the workers and servants. This issue indicates how deeply the problems of the local community were integrated with the official religious institutions. The blessing of the church was, of course, needed to legalize cohabitation. The procedure was that three Sundays before the marriage could take place, the pastor was required to announce the upcoming event from the pulpit, and any impediments to the proposed marriage were to be brought to the attention of the pastor before the marriage took place. But, despite there being no legal hindrances to marriages involving poor people (the only requirement was to be free of debt to the poor-fund), the Icelandic authorities exercised informal restrictions which agreed with the interests of the better-off farmers and landowners. According to the practices of the indigenous officials and local leaders, the reasons for which a marriage could be hindered included the lack of access to farming land and certain personal attributes including incompetence, laziness, fraudulence etc., which made the individual "less qualified as masters of a disciplined household". The local government was expected to oppose the marriage of people who obviously lacked the prerequisites "to sustain themselves and their children in a Christian way". The object of the restrictions was to keep the labour force within the traditional framework of the farmer's household and to hinder the building of families which were likely to become a burden to the community's poor-relief program.¹³

The new marriage law of 1824, made these informal restrictions more difficult to carry out with the result that on various occasions the local leaders petitioned for more strict regulations on the marriage of poor people. With the founding of Alping as an advisory body in 1845, the issue was discussed several times with the majority of the members often being in favour of more legal restrictions. The Danish authorities, however, turned down such requests on the grounds that they were in disharmony with the prevailing liberal attitudes in Denmark. The clergymen in Alping were not united in this matter. Some voted with the farmers whereas others referred to the natural right of the people or to Christian principles in opposing the restrictions.¹⁴

As a rule the communal directors strongly favoured increased restrictions and on several occasions disagreements between them and the local pastor arose over the issue. But it could be assumed that the local authorities and landowners were, in most cases, in a position to continue the informal restrictions in a joint effort.¹⁵

It was difficult for the clergy as ministers of the Church to deny people the right to marry if they had not been the recipients of communal

poor-relief previously and if they met all other formal requirements. In theory, the blessing of the Church was not exclusively for the well-to-do. Furthermore, it was the duty of the clergy to report illegal cohabitation and to suggest measures which could effectively terminate such situations. The most natural solution was to allow the couple to be married.

According to tradition and older laws, vagrancy and begging was a legal means of livelihood for some groups of the poor and sick. Begging increased and became burdensome to the farmers in difficult times. It was often maintained that much of the begging was unnecessary because of the possibility of providing oneself as a farm worker or servant. Towards the end of the 18th century several measures were taken to limit vagrancy by forcing the paupers into permanent employment. Since the beginning of the 19th century, all forms of vagrancy was virtually forbidden.

Spokesmen for the farmer's interests often coupled the problem of the beggars together with that of free-labour, i.e. labour not bound by contract. The free-labourers worked at fishing during the winter season and farming during the intensive summer weeks, demanding of the farmers what was considered, by the farmers themselves, excessive wages. These independent labourers were considered parasites because it was felt that sooner or later they would be out of work and then have to rely on the poor-relief of the home commune for support. Thus, in 1783, all free-labour was forbidden except for those who owned considerable property. All others were to hire out themselves on a one-year basis. All who, for whatever reason, travelled outside their parish were required to obtain a passport or certificate from the sheriff and pastor.

All who desired to settle at the seaside as crofters were required to apply for permission from the communal Board of Relief in the area in which they were settling. The boards were normally restrictive in permitting such settlement out of fear that the newcomers might become a burden on their poor-relief funds. The interests of the farmers who occupied themselves with seasonal fishing differed somewhat from those of the full-time rural farmers in the question of free-labour. The former often protected the free-labourers and encouraged the crofters to settle by the seaside. In this way, and despite the restrictions, the class of free-labourers increased during the 19th century and formed the beginning of the fishing settlements which grew up in the 1880s (see P. Thoroddsen 1922: 330ff; S. Kristjánsson 1954: 23-33).

During the middle of the 18th century the Royal decrees stipulated the direct involvement of the clergy in the administration of the poor-relief. In the new law of 1834, their role, though still significant, assumed more of a supervising than administrative nature except in matters involving support to children in which the director was required to follow their advice (J. Pétursson 1863: 139f). These laws remained in force until 1907, when the matters came under the jurisdiction of the local school boards.

We may assume that until the 1880s, the clergy were in a position to maintain an effective surveillance of the labour market in the rural areas (the pastoral visitations have been described above). In this context, it

should be mentioned that until 1882, the parishioners were bound to the local parish and pastor by law and could normally attend only the local church for religious services. When moving from one parish to another a special certificate was to be obtained from the pastor stating when the individual last participated in Holy Communion. This was then presented to the pastor of the parish to which one moved. The pastor was expected to inspect the papers and passports of new individuals in his parish, and notify the communal director and the sheriff should anything suspicious arise. The names of all newcomers were to be recorded by the pastor and reported to the sheriff in case of necessity. These detailed instructions were included in the first edition of the Church Canon by J. Pétursson in 1863, but missing in the second edition in 1890, which would indicate that they were discontinued in the meantime. (Løvs f Isl II: 578f; Løvs f Isl IV: 580f; J.Pétursson 1863: 88, 144-147)

The "life-style" of the free-labourers was strongly opposed by the farmers and their spokesmen, many of whom were leading intellectuals and officials. At times this "life-style" was associated with life in the urban settlements per se. As mentioned in previous chapters, there was no indigenous bourgeoisie or middle class in Iceland which could develop native traditions of "city-life". The merchants and their agents in Iceland were often Danish or "half-Danish", and were therefore considered alien elements in the Icelandic society whose way of life was often considered a threat to moral order and national values. The free-labourers were usually figured as lazy and vicious characters, obsessed with the gratifications of their own material needs and carnal desires, bearing with them the temptations of the towns, e.g. in the form of luxuries which they sold for profits. This picture is expressed in various kinds of contemporary sources: in novels, in magazine articles, in social and economic discussions, and in official letters and instructions and protocols of Alþingi.

The reason for this portrayal of free-labour and other "alien" elements of the urban settlements was that they found themselves outside the traditional socio-cultural patterns of the household and the local community controlled by the parish pastor and the commune director. As has been mentioned previously (Chapter 4.2.2), the secular outlook and way of life referred to as an indication of de-christianization was maintained to have had its breeding grounds in this sector of society.

In the third quarter of the 19th century the mechanisms of social control of the farming society became stricter and harsher, only to be greatly relaxed in the years that followed, giving way to a new order. A few facts will be summarized here which support this contention.

Since the first half of the 19th century, the burden on the poor-relief institution had become heavier. In 1850, 2.1 percent of the population were recipients of support and 7.3 percent in 1871, which was the highest figure for the entire 19th century (G. A. Gunnlaugsson 1978 p. 108-111). At the same time the habitable farming land was more or less already occupied which seems to have reinforced the conservative attitudes towards the civil rights of the rural labour force. The attitudes toward the marriage of the

poor reiterated above are further indication of this. A similar conclusion may be drawn from the reactions of Alping to the government's bills which intended to loosen the ties on the rural labour force as had already been carried out in Denmark. Nevertheless, due to governmental pressure in 1863, it became easier for those who owned some property to buy themselves free from the obligatory one-year contract. In 1894, new laws made it possible for virtually anyone to buy himself free from the one-year contracts, but by then these restrictions were already ignored by the rural labour force which was increasingly moving to the fishing settlements, as described in Chapter 2.3.

4.4 THE CLERGY IN THE COMMUNAL COUNCILS

The local pastors were as a rule either regular members of - or consultants to - the communal committees and councils that dealt with matters concerning relief for the poor and care of children in the charter towns (S. Þórðarson 1974: 146-156; Þ. Eyjólfsson 1952:43-44; L. Björnsson 1972:136, 162, 262). In 1872, legislation was introduced which established democratically elected communal councils in rural as well as urban settlements. The clergy could be elected but were not automatically members of the councils. The rural councils were, however, still obliged to consult the clergy in matters dealing with the upbringing and education of children. Initially, it appears that things were not altered much with the election of the clergymen to most of the councils, and in many cases they still wrote all official documents.¹⁶

During the first two decades of the 20th century, the clergy still constituted a significant factor in the local government. Of the 209 Communal Councils, 74 included the local pastor more or less for the period of 1907-1920, but only one city council included the parish pastor. Thus, since there were only about 120 pastors in Iceland during this period, more than half of them were active in the local administration at some time during this period (based on H. Guðmundsson, Úrslit sveitarstjórnarkosninga fra 1907). The results of the 1946 communal and city council elections show that pastors were elected to 20 of the total of 231 councils. No city council included the parish pastor (based on Kosninga handbók 1948). By this time, the communes and town councils numbered about twice the benefices, whereas in 1872, they were almost equal in number. Thus, less than 20 percent of the clergy were elected into the local administrative bodies in the late 1940s.

4.5 VARIOUS CIVIL ENGAGEMENTS OF THE CLERGY

The social and cultural activities of the clergy in the local community served the local people and government in a variety of ways. In the beginning of the 19th century, several clergymen practiced medicine and some continued throughout the century to turn to aid the sick. The main reason for this, as described earlier, was due to inadequate professional medical services in the country.

For the 19th century, 112 lay-physicians who provided some kind of medical service are mentioned in the catalogue of physicians in Iceland. Of these, 30 were clergymen, and 5 the wives of clergymen. Unlike previous centuries, no sheriffs are found mentioned for this period. Prior to mid-19th century it appears that some physicians used and even encouraged clergymen to assist in medical care (P. Bjarnason 1897: 5; J. Jónsson 1887: 10-11). Towards the middle of the century some clergymen introduced homeopathy which became a kind of popular medicine, and continued into the 20th century.

In the 18th century, Danish authorities authorized a law prohibiting all medical practice by non-professional. However, during the first half of the 19th century in Iceland, these laws were not followed nor was there any interest in enforcing them for the obvious reason that adequate medical services were lacking (see Chapter 3.3) In the latter half of the 19th century, several proceedings and law-suits based on these laws were initiated by certain physicians and druggists. The proceedings were very unpopular among the local people, and were criticized even by lawyers for being contrary to the sense of justice of the nation. On three separate occasions the Danish government rejected bills or recommendations reached in the Icelandic Alþing on the legalization of the right of lay-people to practice medicine. A compromise was reached in 1884 when the King authorized a law which granted that practicing lay-people should not be prosecuted unless their activities were proven to cause injury.

In discussing the various non-ecclesiastical activities of the clergy, one leading clergyman, not himself a practitioner, wrote that the medical advisory activity was warranted by the lack of professional physicians. Furthermore, he considered it compatible with the role of the clergy in "following Jesus' footsteps". He maintained that the clergy were more qualified than other lay-physicians because they were less tempted to overestimate their own capacity (V. Briem 1895: 154).

In 1911, new laws restricted, once again, the activities of lay-practitioners and in 1932, legislation prohibited it altogether. By this time the health service had reached modern standards and there is no evidence that the clergy regretted this development. (Alþt 1865 I 74-75, 777f, II: 530-532; Alþt 1879 I: 81, II: 149-160; Alþt 1881 II: 510-540; Tstj m Isl II: 428f; S. Jónsson 1950: 25-29).

Despite the unwillingness of the Danish authorities to legalize lay-practitioners of medicine in Iceland, the clergy were used to extend the health services in another respect. In 1816, the clergy were made responsible for the vaccination against smallpox, and for the keeping of records of those vaccinated in their parishes. This remained their official duty throughout the 19th century. It appears that, prior to 1890, they carried out the vaccinations themselves, whereafter it was cared for by others leaving the clergy to mind the formal administration (Lofs f Isl VII: 603, 785f; J. Pétursson 1890: 147-153). According to the vaccination registry, the task was transferred to the professional public health services at the turn of the century (J. Þorkelsson 1917).¹⁷

Among the non-ecclesiastical duties of the clergy during the 19th

century could also be included the collection of information on local prices.¹⁸

A further instance of how the government administration integrated the clergy into its bureaucracy and used their insights and knowledge of local affairs without giving them formal executive power was the appointment of clergymen to the two-member Boards of Conciliation which were established to discourage the taking up of private matters in court trials (J. Pétursson 1890: 149-150).

4.6 DECLINE IN RELIGIOUS INVOLVEMENT

We have described above how the household devotional hours were discontinued and that this process began in the towns and villages. The decline of the traditional forms of devotions in the 19th century was not replaced by other forms of religious involvement. On the contrary, it seems that there was a simultaneous decline in church attendance as well.¹⁹

After 1881, the Office of the Bishop collected figures from the pastors of the Holy Communion. These figures show a steady decline in participation at the Holy Communion since the beginning of the 1880s, at which time more than half of the adult population, i.e. the confirmed, took part.

Table 4.2 indicates that the decline was rapid in all areas of the country until after the turn of the century, and that in the second decade of the 20th century, the level of participation averaged below 10 percent. Thereafter, only a slight decrease has been noted. Table 4.3 shows that the process started earlier and was more rapid in urban areas where, in the 1880s, only one of three persons participated in Holy Communion.²⁰

In explaining this decline and the variations between the deaneries, theological and religious explanations are of little help; we should instead look for social factors. As stated above (and as will be analyzed more in detail in Chapter 6), there was little 19th century theological reflection which would have redefined the act of taking communion, making it less significant from a religious point of view. At first glance, the low figures in the district of S-Pingeyjar would seem to oppose this (see Chapter 6.5.3). In this district several local leaders were outspoken critics of the State Church and of the official religion. But low figures can also be seen for Húnavatns district, for instance, which, similar to S-Pingeyjar, was rural and in which there is no indication that the low figures result from criticism of the Church or religion on the whole.

The rural districts of the South and East (A-Skafta, V-Skafta, Rangarvalla and Árnes) show consistently high figures throughout the period despite some decline. It seems that the more rural the district, the higher the practice. However, not all the variation is explained by whether or not the district is a characteristically farming or fishing area. Some of the farming districts show relatively low practice figures (Húnavatns, S-Pingeyjar and N-Pingeyjar), whereas the main fishing districts (Kjalarnes and Snæfellsnes) show higher practice figures than one would expect, had means of livelihood been a crucial factor.

Table 4.2 Communicants in Percent of All Confirmed 1881-1934, by Deanaries

	1881-83	1884	1889	1894	1899	1904	1909	1914	1919	1924	1929	1934
Múla	45	26	-	26	12	12	7	5	7	7	5	6
S-Múla	69	55	37	15	11	9	7	4	5	4	5	3
A-Skafta	108	86	64	53	32	22	24	13	10	10	10	2
V-Skafta	-	-	50	54	24	17	13	7	6	8	6	3
Rangarvalla	62	58	51	49	39	22	20	15	10	9	12	10
Arnes	74	63	64	58	53	36	26	19	13	13	14	11
Kjalarnes	58	41	28	29	16	15	10	13	11	10	10	10
Borgarfjarðar	57	-	27	21	16	10	10	5	4	7	9	9
Mýra	71	-	-	28	16	11	6	5	3	6	3	3
Snæfellsnes	49	37	29	25	18	19	13	14	13	11	18	10
Dala	54	-	-	18	16	16	8	11	7	6	7	5
Barðastranda	51	-	-	39	25	22	19	7	7	12	9	6
V-Isafjarðar	-	-	45	29	16	15	13	10	12	12	12	9
N-Isafjarðar	60	39	40	24	13	11	6	6	9	7	8	12
Stranda	55	-	-	28	13	7	4	1	4	4	7	5
Húnavatns	18	21	18	13	10	6	3	3	4	3	4	4
Skagafjarðar	42	38	39	22	17	13	13	6	7	7	5	4
Eyjarfjarðar	53	48	-	33	23	11	8	4	4	5	4	4
S-Bingeyjar	62	44	33	13	8	8	5	4	4	2	2	3
N-Bingeyjar	57	-	-	22	12	9	5	1	5	5	5	5
Average	57.9	46.3	40.4	29.9	19.5	15	11	7.7	7.4	7.4	7.7	6.3

Source: Messuskýrslur Bps CVI 279-296, National Archive Rvk.

Table 4.3 The Establishment of Churches, Pastoral Residence and the Practice of Holy Communion in the Largest Towns

	Year Church Establ.	Own Local Pastor	Communicants in Percent of Confirmed					
			1881/84	1894	1904	1914	1924	1934
Rvík.	*	*	30	8	13	-	10	10
Akureyri.	1862	1881	12	4	3	2	4	4
Hafnaf.	1914	1928	67	-	14	19	10	11
Veyj.	*	1961	-	12	6	3	5	10
Ísafjörð.	1860	*	32	8	5	5	6	6
Sigluf.	1890	*	38	18	13	3	4	3
Akranes.	1896	1886	61	21	12	7	10	11
Neskaupst.	1897	1894	-	-	13	18	7	6
Seyðisf.	1921	1938	7	4	4	3	2	3
Mean:			35	11	9	8	6	7

* This took place sometime before 1800.

Sources: The same as for Table 4.2; in addition: B. Magnusson 1976; S. Nielsson 1949-51; and the Bishop's Archive, Reykjavík.

From a sociological point of view, the primary reason for the general decline in communion participation was most likely the disengagement of the clergy from the administrative and surveillance functions at the local level. This process could be characterized as "desacralization of social control", of which the decline in participation at Holy Communion is an expression. Previously, we have seen how the official religion legitimated the patriarchal order of the farmer society. Every parishioner was more or less under obligation to receive Holy Communion at least once yearly, and not to do so was regarded as offensive conduct and a neglections of ones duties as a member of the community. Several sources indicate that the practice of receiving Communion twice in a year was usual at the middle of the 19th century (J. Pétursson 1863: 88; Ó. Sigurísson 1892: 128; Þ. Bjarnason 1891: 54; J. Jónason 1945: 368).

The previous analysis demonstrates how socialization and social control was, in various ways, a part of the official religious institutions on the local level. The Communion services were integrated with the social control mechanisms on the local level with the pastor playing a key role. With the appearance of legislative and governmental legal measures leading to differentiation and the development of a more mobile labour force, the social significance of the pastor in this respect and of participation in Holy Communion lost effect and, along with it, the traditional forces of social control. Decline in the practice is observed in all parts of the country but more so in those settlements where the disengagement of the clergy was

the greatest. Once this process of disengagement and desacralization was well under way, it may well have become associated with theological reflection and religious critique over the meaning and purpose of the act itself which, in combination with the sociological factors, might account for some of the local variance. Such an explanation should not be over-emphasized since other factors such as changes in the benefice structure and the residence of the pastor might also account for variation. The assumption here is that such changes might result in decreasing identification of the parishioners with the Church.

Table 4.3 shows that there was a considerable lag in some cases between the development of the townships and the establishment of a church and pastoral residence. Thus, at the turn of the century a considerable sector of the urban population was alienated from the traditional institutional framework of the Church as a part of the identity of the local community.

Table 4.3 reveals, however, that it was not necessarily those settlements lacking a church and pastor which consistently show the lowest level of participation in communion. The relevant point is that the differentiation process had progressed further in the urban communities where the pastor had a lesser social function than in the rural, farming areas. In the urban areas communion came to be associated with quite a different kind of devotion and piety than in the rural areas where it was integrated with the entire system of social control.

The new religious formations of the 20th century in Iceland were urban phenomena. The new social order of the urban settlements will be the main factor in our analysis of such movements in Chapter 7.

4.7 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The rural population of 19th century Iceland was highly integrated and involved in the official religious framework. Of particular importance was the devotional observance in the homes since the household played a central role both socially and economically. Linked to this was the clergy's surveillance of the household as a mechanism of social control. Religious socialization was an integral part of the traditional pattern of life in Iceland whose cultural and social values throughout the 19th century were entirely based on rural traditions. As active participants in the local government, the clergy were central figures in the local community, engaged in a variety of undertakings imposed upon them from the parishioners and by the Royal administration.

The central administration called upon the religious organization to penetrate the periphery of Iceland in an effort to standardize the official model of administrative control. Thus, the clergy functioned as a crucial mediator between the local population and the civil authorities, all the more so in light of there not being the middle class, bourgeoisie or aristocracy.

In the other Nordic countries the clergy maintained various administrative and social functions, but there are indications that this happened to a greater extent on Iceland and that the pattern lasted longer

than elsewhere. For the first, Iceland had relatively more clergy and, therefore, more points of contact with the local people were established. The Icelandic clergyman maintained more contact with the individual households than occurred in the other countries. A further indication concerns primary education, which in Iceland was supervised by the clergy in the homes more or less throughout the 19th century, whereas in the other Nordic countries, obligatory primary schools were established in the first half of the century.

In Iceland, the clergy's position was normally something less than theological experts; intellectually, they were closely related to national values and their education did not foster cleavages between them and the popular culture. This, together with their relatively low economic status, lessened the socio-cultural distance between the clergy and the farming community. Locally, the clergy often shared the same interests as the better-off farmers and it was natural that they represented the community towards the "outer world" in various matters because of their education and contacts with the bureaucracy at different levels.

The changes observed in this pattern of integration of the religious and civil functions are related to the process of urbanization and differentiation of the economical structure and associated with the growing free labour-market sector. These processes were not visibly characteristic of Iceland until after the 1870s. Subsequently, one observes an increasing formal disengagement of the clergy and the official religious institutions from certain key aspects of social life on the local level. This is most obvious in the developing urban settlements. These processes synchronized with the development of new forms of local government of which the church, as an institution, and the clergy were no longer automatically a part. The new forms of administration were no longer legitimized by the official religious ideology, and in this respect one can speak of desacralization of social control. At the same time, the development of a more differentiated professional structure and civil service is observed. Furthermore, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, one observes a process of disengagement of primary education from the Church and its transposition to the sphere of specialized agencies. This, too, could be labeled desacralization of primary education in view of its former role in preparation for confirmation.

The disengagement of the various social functions from the role of the clergy and the desacralization of education and social control was associated with decreased involvement in the traditional forms of religion. Arising out of such a situation one would expect a type of organic religious reaction against this development involving the church and clergy. As for the parishioners, the situation could be defined in no other way than that the church was losing its control over the people. As will be shown in Chapter 6, such definitions of the situation were increasingly common in the press and in public debates since the 1880s. There was talk of "secularization" and of "de-christianization", but an organic reaction did not take place in 19th century Iceland. The clergy, as such, opposed neither the new developments nor the legitimations; the rationale for the

more specialized and differentiated structures.

A careful analysis of the overall process of differentiation must consider that the decrease in the number of clergy, both in absolute and relative terms, accounts for a large share of their disengagement which necessarily entailed transposition of functions formerly under the clergy to a new and more specialized agencies. As described above, the decision of the Alping and the Government to consolidate benefices was often resented by the people. The consolidations, which were frequent occurrences from the beginning of the 1880s, made it increasingly difficult for the clergy to participate in the local government and supervise primary education. A modern primary education system was not developed until it was quite clear that the clergy could not manage the responsibility for the mandatory education.

Neither did the disengagement of primary education from the auspices of the religious institutions cause confrontation between the Church and the new profession of teachers. On the contrary, one has to conclude that this was a gradual process characterized by the active participation of the clergy. The conflicts and clashes of opinion were not between the clergy and the secular professionals, rather, they occurred within the clergy and within the new group of professional educators whose leaders were initially, to a considerable extent, recruited from among theologians and clergymen.

Church leaders participated in the formation of legislation which determined the benefice consolidation processes which was partially the reason why they were carried through and accepted by the people in the long run. In this respect, the local people were more conservative than the church leaders which is indicated by the number of parishes remaining more steady, whereas the number of benefices has been altered. The parish structure was a matter of the local parish councils to decide and not Alping. In 1890, there were 144 benefices composed of 284 parishes, and by 1930, there were 110 benefices and 270 parishes.

One does not get the impression from contemporary sources that the clergy opposed the decision not to automatically include the local pastor in the local government. One reason for this might be that their former participation did not depend on their position as representatives of the Church and consequently, their absence was not directly associated with a loss in the status of the Church. Furthermore, there was no autonomous church leadership reaction around which clerical opposition could have been organized. The Church leadership was, instead, integrated with the state authorities and did not have an autonomous position in social and political issues.

Even though a part of the religious hegemony of the state-church, on the local level the clergy maintained a certain degree of freedom in economic, social and political matters which allowed them to engage themselves in the process of mobilization of the broad stratum.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. Various publications might be mentioned wherein this ideology is expressed. One of the most outstanding is the book of "wholesome advise" specified for each stratum, in verse by J. Magnússon 1842.
2. Sources on the seating positions are as follows: I Einarsson 1972: 44-45; K. Þorsteinsson 1946: 268ff; Ó. Ólafsson 1892: 42; Þ. Bjarnason 1891: 52; Fjk XII,13 1895; Alm þjóðv f 1914: 88f. On the introduction by the pastor: Fjk VIII, 49, 1891; Þ. Þorðarsson 1960: 69; but the main source is S. Einarsson 1977: 111ff).
3. Forordning om Husbesøgelser 27 Mai 1746, Anordning om Hustugt paa Island 3 Juni 1746, Instruction for Superintendenterne 1 Juli 1746, in Lovs f Isl II: 566-578, 605-620, 648-668; for the following presentation of these regulations I have also relied on J. Helgason 1927; P.E. Ólason and Þ. Jbhannesson 1943; Þ. Jbhannesson 1950; J. Pétursson 1863 and 1890)
4. It has been pointed out in a more recent investigation of the historical data that the definition of literacy in the 18th century would not measure up to a modern definition. Reading was often confined to religious texts which the reader often knew by heart (L. Guttormsson 1981: 145f) Nevertheless, it can safely be stated that the Icelandic populace as a whole was close to literacy by the beginning of the 19th century.
5. There are many individual descriptions of the winter's eve. One of the most systematic presentations is found in J. Jónason 1945: 7-9, 359ff, and in H. Kjær 1935: 55-73; but the most thorough historical investigation is presented in M. Gíslason 1977.
6. He was an ardent pietist and a commissary of the British Bible Society to disseminate the Bible and investigate religious life on Iceland. Among other travellers to Iceland who wrote of their experiences, he was exceptional in that he knew the Icelandic language. His travel book is considered among the very best on Iceland.
7. Interesting in this respect are the attitudes towards the first systematic publication of the folk-sagas and legends. This process was carried out in the middle of the 19th century mainly by two men, one of whom was a pastor, the other the Bishop's secretary. By then, however, the old Enlightenment policy was replaced by Romanticism in the literary tradition and to some extent in politics (see Chapter 5.2). The intellectual elite in Copenhagen favoured the view that the ancient tales should be collected and written down (Fjölnir IV 1838;

Nfélr XX 1861:191). The clergy were instrumental in gathering material for the first collection and only a few refused to contribute in this endeavour. Among those refusing were older pastors who resented the scheme as an attempt at "alluring superstition and silly stories out of the common people" and motivated their rejection on the grounds that such collections represented a threat to the Christian faith of their parishioners (see S. Nordal 1972:xlvi-li).

8. This proposition cannot be developed any further here, nor is it necessary for the major thesis of the study. For evidence of the hypothesis we could point to the biography of Rev. Árni Þórarinnsson by Þ. Þórðarson 1969 and 1970, and the ethnographical work of J. Jonason 1945.)
9. The "travelling teachers" stayed at farms for a few weeks at a time, holding lessons for the neighborhood children before moving on to the next location.
10. See the abstracts of the protocols which appeared in K bl 1891-97. The official books and documents of several deaneries preserved in the National Archives also include records on such examinations, J. Þorkelsson 1917.
11. Alþt 1889 and applications to the "Stifts" authorities in the National Archives in Reykjavík, Skjalasafn Stiftsyfirvalda Stv. JE nr. 708, 1878-1894.
12. Among the undertakings in which the pastor was expected to assist was the calculation of the extra tax and the writing of the official agricultural reports. Lovs f Isl V: 644f; Lovs f Isl VII: 313; Lovs f Isl X, 764-766; J. Pétursson 1863:141; Fjölnir I 1835:24-30).
13. G. Gunnarsson 1980a:12-14; Lovs f Isl VII: 311; A. Snævar 1955: 16-20. Typically enough, the officials were freed from the pulpit announcements. see J. Pétursson 1863: 107.
14. See, e.g. 1865 I: 82 and 644. On two occasions a vote was taken on the issue where one can see how the individual members voted. In the first such vote, in 1865, the resolution for increased restrictions passed by 17 votes to 8. Among the 17 in favour were 3 clergymen and among the 8 against were 4. In the second vote, on 1869, 10 members voted in favour, 3 of whom were clergy, and 15 against including 6 clergy. Alþt 1865 I: 721 and 1869 II: 165.
15. See, e.g. Alþt 1859: 145; 1865 I: 641; 1869 I: 164, 174. The relatively low nuptiality rate in Iceland and the high rate of illegitimacy are indications of the efficiency of this control. Around 1870, illegitimacy rate was high and the nuptiality rate very

low (G. Gunnarsson 1980: 21ff).

16. Unfortunately there are no sources available on how many of the councils actually included the local pastors before the turn of the century. That they were elected to a majority of the councils is based on a statement in the autobiography of the Reviser of the National Treasure 1879-1918, I. Einarsson 1972: 214).
17. The clergymen's role as supervisors of vaccination in Iceland in the 19th century was not unique. In Sweden, the clergy were given similar responsibilities (R. Norrman 1979: 128-129).
18. In 1817, a new system of price assessment was introduced. Both the local pastor and the commune director gathered figures on the actual prices for different products and sent them to higher authorities (to the dean and the sheriff), who in turn sent the figures, systematized for each district, to the Governor and the Bishop. Thus, two separate commodity prices were calculated for each district; the one based on the "secular" list of the directors and sheriffs, the other, "clerical", based on the lists of the pastors and deans. The average of these two prices became the official mean price. The system was modified somewhat in the 1890s, but the clergy continued to participate in this scheme until 1903 (Skýr um landshagi I, 1858:234-239; Lofs f Isl VII: 701f).
19. There are no systematic figures on church attendance in Iceland for the period of study, but scattered information from different sources suggests that this was the case (see, e.g. J. Helgason 1903: 199).
20. The documents show that for the first years, some clergymen reported the number of parishioners participating in Holy Communion not considering that they might have participated more than once. This misunderstanding was subsequently corrected and the number of occasions were included in the reporting.

5. Clergy, Church and Mobilization

In Chapter 3 we dealt with the clergy as a stratum within the intelligentsia and as officials of the Establishment. In Chapter 4 the clergy's role on the local level was analyzed as was their integration into the social structure of the farming community. In this chapter we will examine how their position vis-a-vis the Establishment on the one hand, and the farming community on the other, influenced their role in the processes of political and social nation-building. Also taken into account are the official religious legitimations and their relation to these processes. The latter aspect will be discussed further in the next chapter.

An often raised question concerning religious and church life in Iceland has to do with the absence of popular religious revivals in Iceland in comparison to other Nordic countries. At least part of the reason for this will be discussed in the following analysis of the nation-building processes.

5.1 THE POLITICAL MOBILIZATION AND OFFICIAL THEOLOGIES: 1830 - 1850

During the first three decades of the 19th century a majority of the higher officials of the Danish state were greatly influenced by the Enlightenment. They supported both ideologically and practically the administration of the Enlightened Monarchy. This applied as well to the Icelandic officials despite the colonial status of Iceland. The higher officials of the Church, the Bishop and the principal of the Bessastaðir School supported the Establishment and had theological leanings towards Rationalism or a mild form thereof (J. Helgason 1922: 177f; J. Jónsson 1955:69; P. Melsted 1897; H. Hugason 1983: 122f; Müller 1833: 406f)

The leading officials had little understanding of the old national values and institutions which, according to them, stood in the way of practical administrative changes. This is illustrated in their decisions in matters relating to administration and publication. As mentioned earlier, the ancient political institution of Alþing at Þingvellir was abolished and replaced by a high court in Reykjavík in 1800. At the same time the old Northern Bishopric was done away with, an action for which considerable consternation on the local level was directed towards the central administration in Reykjavík.

The Enlightenment in Iceland was naturally combined with progressive attitudes in the areas of economics and literature but for various reasons, it did not mobilize much support among the common people (Þ. Jóhannesson 1950; 361f; N. Ólafsdóttir 1961: 43).

At the beginning of the century the Icelandic Society for Enlightenment was very powerful. It controlled the only printing press in the country and held a monopoly on publication rights. This position was consciously used to the advantage of the society in propagating its own religious and ecclesiastical ideals. The society's most powerful leader and, in fact, its absolute administrator was the Chief of the High Court, Magnús Stephensen, for a long time the most prominent member of the powerful Stephensen family. The members of the family occupied many of the leading positions both in the Church and of the civil administration during this period of time .

The faithful officials of the Royal administration did little to stimulate the participation of the local people in politics or administration, and on the whole they supported the governing system of authoritarian hierarchy. The masses were to be educated to be submissive to the officials of the state. For the first three decades of the century the general attitude of the common people was characterized by complete political and social apathy. The populace did not see the value of organized activities in the furtherment of their interests. All contemporary societies were lead by high officials and, with the exception of the Icelandic Literary Society, with no or very limited base among the ordinary farming population (P. Fyðjöfsson 1952: 24; P. Melsted 1912: 48; Fjölfnir I, 1835: 1ff; L. Kristjánsson 1953: 35; Þ. Jóhannesson 1950: 407; Þ. Jóhannesson 1955: 31f).

At the end of the 1820s the Society for Enlightenment lost much of its initial vitality. At this time the only available Icelandic publication was the yearbook of the Copenhagen Department of the Icelandic Literary Society which included literary and political news from the outside world.

The nationalist mobilization which started during the 1830s was led by young Icelandic intellectuals and students at the University of Copenhagen. They were inspired by an intellectual milieu other than that which had moulded the mentality of the previous generation of officials in Iceland.

In the political, cultural and theological realms they were influenced by the Romantic world-view. From it the Icelandic students received encouragement in their aspirations of Icelandic nationhood and political rights of the people. In this respect, they were also affected by the political events in Europe including the French June Revolution and, even closer, the events in the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, where the national movements of the German speaking population were becoming powerful in their opposition to the Danish administration

In the wake of these events, the Icelandic intelligentsia in Copenhagen constituted a group of considerable political and cultural significance while fulfilling a leadership role in process of political nation building. The group's location in Copenhagen was crucial in this respect since this was the political centre for Icelandic matters with all major decisions being made here (Chapter 2.4). Copenhagen was also the cultural centre of Iceland (Chapter 3.3).

In their publications, printed in Copenhagen, the intelligentsia were critical of Icelandic politics and presented their political and cultural ideas based on the new trends. Their main objective was in broadening the

political rights of the Icelandic people and in nationalizing the administration. Of prime importance was the foundation of a separate advisory body elected by the people of Iceland to represent the nation before the Absolute Monarchy (J. Jónsson 1955: 106-110; N. Ólafsdóttir 1961: 12-37; B. Einarsson 1889; S. Kristjánsson 1948). In the minds of the Icelandic students in the 1830s, this idea was closely associated with the glory of the ancient political institution of Iceland at Þingvellir, established in 930.

Initially, the Danish authorities and several officials in Iceland opposed the idea of a separate advisory body. But in 1839, King Christian VIII exhibited a more positive attitude than did his predecessors. His support for the idea of a special consultative body met increasing sympathy in the higher echelons of the administration, and in 1845, Alþing was established in Reykjavík as a representative advisory body. This turned out to be the first step in the development of an independent Icelandic political centre (O. R. Grímsson 1974: 227; S. Kristjánsson 1981: 83).

Further goals of the National Liberal leaders included the development of higher education, improvements in the Latin School and the establishment of a separate seminary within the country for the education of the clergy. These goals were realized in the 1840s with the Latin School at Bessastaðir relocating to Reykjavík and the founding of the Theological Seminary in Reykjavík in 1847.

The fact that the official Establishment, which supported the idea of the Enlightened Absolutism and the power of the Danish centre leaned, theologically, towards Rationalism was of significance for the onset of the national mobilization in religious respects. The opposition of the Icelandic students in Copenhagen towards the hegemonous administration in Iceland, and particularly towards Chief Justice Magnus Stephensen and his Society for Enlightenment, was also theologically motivated.

It has been previously illustrated (Table 3.2) that during the first half of the 19th century, a large group of Icelandic students in Copenhagen were theological students. Romanticism was associated with a philosophical and religious reaction to the Rationalistic theology of the Church of Denmark leadership. These reactions were inspired either by the New-Orthodoxy or by a variety of Pietism. The Icelandic students and particularly the theological students at the university were influenced by Romantically-oriented theological ideas and by the New-Orthodoxy since the 1830s (J. Helgason 1941:135,ff; J. Helgason 1922: 176).

The Icelandic students translated and published several works, e.g. the collection of sermons of Bishop Mynster who was greatly influenced by Romanticism and opposed to the Rationalism-inspired clergymen of the Church of Denmark (H. Koch 1954: 150f; H. C. Dela 1960: 148). It has been maintained that the last remains of Rationalism in Iceland were eradicated by this book which became popular as a book of sermons for use in family devotions (J. Helgason 1927:323).

These trends were theologically nearer the old Lutheran Orthodoxy, which still served as the basis of religious life among the common people

which still served as the basis of religious life among the common people and a majority of the clergy in Iceland (4.2.2), than the Enlightenment-inspired theologies characteristic of the top leadership at the beginning of the century. The Icelandic intelligentsia in Copenhagen organized the reprinting of older orthodox religious literature. This same material had been prevented from being published in Iceland by the Society for Enlightenment which, in doing so was acting in accordance with its ideals in the education of the populace. In 1828, for instance, a new edition of the Vidalinspostilla (a popular book of sermons from the early 18th century) was published despite the protests of Chief Justice Stephensen who claimed exclusive publication rights of the book for his society. The republication was apparently widely appreciated by the Icelandic readers and a new edition appeared ten years later. (b. Jóhannesson 1950: 70).

5.2 THE NATIONALISTIC ELITES AND THE DISSEMINATION OF THEIR IDEAS

The Icelandic intelligentsia in Copenhagen published several magazines to aid them in introducing their national and political ideas and strategies into Iceland. And despite the limited quantity of publications, the material had considerable effect on the population and soon became crucial for the political nation building process. This together with the publishings of the Copenhagen Department of the Icelandic Literary Society constituted the main sources of political and social information, given the very few papers and magazines published domestically (see Chapter 6.5.1).

The first of these political magazines was Ármann a Alþingi, published from 1829 until 1833. It included articles on various subjects concerning the socio-economical development. Furthermore, it emphasized cultural elements, particularly the preservation of the Icelandic language as significant for general national improvement. Already its name can be associated with the reconstruction of Alþingi as the foundation for national development. This publication, as did subsequent ones to some extent, turned itself to the rank and file of the rural population. Its editor and chief writer was the young lawyer, Baldvin Þinarsson, who was also the leader of a group of politically active students called "Brotherhood Alþingi". The co-editor was the young theologian Þorgeir Guðmundsson, who was the central figure in the publication activities of Icelandic religious literature in Copenhagen. In opposition to the monopoly of the Society for Enlightenment, he had already established a distribution network throughout Iceland with clergymen acting as agents by selling his books among their parishioners. This network was also used for distributing Ármann a Alþingi which had about 500 subscribers.¹

A subsequent magazine, Fjölur, was founded in 1835 by four intellectuals in Copenhagen and was published until 1847. The last volumes were published by a society of the same name as the magazine itself. One of the four original editors, Tómas Sæmundsson, returned to Iceland to become a pastor. He served as a crucial link between the Copenhagen group and

Iceland, using his position at the Official Clergy Meetings to distribute and recommend both the magazine and its ideas (T. Samundsson 1907: 17ff). Theologically, he was opposed to the Rationalist ideas of the Enlightenment and heavily criticized the Book of Sermons published by the Society for Enlightenment for use in the households (J. Helgason 1941: 134ff).

In 1841, another group of Icelandic students in Copenhagen began publishing the Ný félagsrit. The leader of the group and editor of the publication was Jón Sigurðsson who became the most influential political leader among the Icelandic intellectuals in Copenhagen in the late 1840s, and in fact the leading figure in the entire political nation building movement until his death in 1879.

In the 1840s, the situation had changed somewhat. The political goals of the pioneers of a separate consultative body for Iceland had been realized along with the founding of the Theological Seminary and improvements of the Latin School. The hegemony of Magnús Stephensen (d. 1833) disappeared with him in the early 1830s without major conflicts with the nation building movement. No one was left to continue the policy of confrontation against the political nation-building process under the mantle of the previous "Rationalistic Establishment". The president of the newly established Theological Seminary was a member of the Fjölnir group and was influenced in his theology by Romanticism. This was also true of the other main teacher of the seminary who was a member of the group around Ný félagsrit.

The policy of Jón Sigurðsson was less influenced by Romanticism than his predecessor's ideas had been, and he was less motivated to oppose the ideas of Rationalism. In several respects, his political philosophy was a combination of the romantically inspired conceptions of nationhood and the more rationalistic and practical orientations of the Enlightenment. He and his group wanted Alþing situated in Reykjavík whereas the more romantically influenced thought it should be situated at the old "sacred" place of Þingvellir. The location of Alþing and the Theological Seminary in Reykjavík along with the Latin School was the beginning of the process to establish Reykjavík as the political and cultural centre of Iceland, which was quite in line with the political programme of Jón Sigurðsson. From the very beginning and throughout his political career Sigurðsson was in contact with clergymen in all parts of Iceland. As president of the Copenhagen Department of the Icelandic Literary Society his contact network was further expanded, with the clergy playing a large role in this, too.²

An examination of the records of the Copenhagen Department of the Literary Society shows that for the years 1855-1856, 40 percent of all correspondence with the society was from clergymen in Iceland, and these years are not unusual in this respect (Dagbók deildar FIF 1855-1863).

In 1844, 1846 and 1856, Ný félagsrit published a list of subscribers and agents and the number of copies each received. Those with multiple subscriptions were, in essence, agents for the periodical. Table 5.1 indicates the occupational and social position of these agents.

Table 5.1 Occupation or Social Status of the Agents of Ný félagsrit: 1844, 1846 and 1856

Occupation or social status	1844	1846	1856
Clergyman	12	24	19
Higher civil- official	5	7	
Student	5	14	1
Farmer		2	4
Farm servant		2	
Merchant, director of trade company	1	3	2
Skilled worker		1	1
No information	3	2	1
Total	26	55	28

Source: N. félr. IV 1844: 180f; ibid VI, 1846: 220ff; ibid XVI, 1856: 196f.

According to Table 5.1, the clergymen were as crucial as mediators in the political mobilization during the 1840s and 1850s as they had been for the editors of Ármann a Alþingi and Fjölfnir during the 1830s. Clergymen comprised nearly half of the agents in 1844 and 1846, and two-thirds in 1856.

There were also single subscribers of Ný félagsrit, for instance in 1846, 33 clergymen received one copy of the periodical in addition to the 24 counted previously. Thus, about 30 percent of the clergy received the magazine directly from the editor.

Most of the clergymen with whom Sigurðsson had permanent contact supported his policy (see, e.g. L. Kristjánsson 1955: 132-148). As will be indicated later, his policy was also supported by a large majority of the clergymen elected to Alþingi. On several occasions Sigurðsson emphasized the importance of the clergy for the political nation building process and for the social upgrading of the people (see, e.g. N félr VI 1846: 72f).

In Chapter 3 we saw that a large proportion of the intellectual stratum was comprised by the clergy and that there was no practical difference between those who entered directly into the service of the Church and those who did not; in essence, all intellectuals were conceivably an extension of the Church of Iceland during the first half of the 19th century. The church leadership and a small minority of the clergy had studied at the University of Copenhagen and were, thus, colleagues and acquaintances of the political elite in Copenhagen. Some of the most prominent political organizers and ardent supporters of the policy of Sigurðsson were clergymen

who had studied theology at the university. Furthermore, a majority of the Icelandic intellectuals had been students at the Bessastaðir School, which functioned as an institute for pastoral education in Iceland. By way of their publications and private letters the intelligentsia in Copenhagen informed their former classmates and friends of trends in Europe and their ideas about the implications of these for the political situation in Iceland. All of these configurations help account for the role of the clergy in the distribution of the political ideas and programmes of the elite in Copenhagen.

The rising political awareness of the people in the 1840s and the beginning of the 1850s, as indicated by the numerous petitions from local meetings all over the country for increased national rights demonstrates that the ideas of the Copenhagen elite reached the farming population, and that the network, mainly composed of the clergy, was effective in distributing the information (see S. Kristjánsson 1981: 132ff; S. Kristjánsson 1948: 108f; H. Hallgrímsson 1923: 139ff).

5.3 RELIGIOUS OR NATIONALISTIC REVIVAL?

Neither Ný félagsrit nor any of the previous publications of the Icelandic intelligentsia in Copenhagen were in any sense devoted primarily to the theological issues and ecclesiastical questions. Such matters were dealt with casually in connection with other subjects. An exception is the first number of Ármann a Alþingi. It presented religion as crucial for moral and national upgrading. Truthfull and devoted religious practice according to the official standards both within the context of the household and the parish services were emphasised much in the same manner as in the Royal regulations on education and religious matters introduced in the middle of the 18th century (see Chapter 4.2). The paper's emphasis on the moral and practical aspects of religious life was in line with the official Enlightenment-inspired theology; but, in several instances a shift is noted towards a more orthodox standpoint (this has also been noted by V. Gíslason 1923: 255).

Important among the intelligentsia were items related to the economic status of the clergy and the functioning of the clergy on the social level among the local people, especially in primary education. In one way or another the magazines maintained the view that the official Christian religion was the basis of the social order and that the observance of religious duties was the most vital factor in social solidarity and morality. These issues were presented unassumingly and unproblematically, without direct reference to doctrinal disputes or theological controversies (see, e.g. Fjölnir VII 1844: 3-28; Ármann a Alþingi I 1829: 45-66; N félr I, 1841: 1-12, 77; ibid IV, 1844: 8-12; ibid V, 1845: 2-16; Ibid XVII, 1857: 95f; see also P. E. Ólason 1920: 15-28). In describing the European revolutions, with which the writers clearly sympathized, reservations were made for the treatment allotted Christianity and the attitudes of the revolutionaries in this respect (Norðurfari I 1848: 55, 73; N félr I 1841: 77).

As presented by the nationalistic leaders, belief in God and faithfulness towards the fatherland were among the values of highest significance to all Christian people. In a philosophical essay dealing with the historical origin of the idea of nationhood in the development of Christianity, the author alludes to the significance of Protestantism (N félr V, 1845: 12ff). Similar ideas, but in a more popularized version, were a recurrent theme in the first numbers of the nationalistic paper Þjóðlífur, started in Reykjavik in 1848.

Somewhat unexpectedly, these publications failed to take issue with any of the contemporary theological debates so characteristic of the contemporary academic milieu and intellectual life in Copenhagen. And although the Icelandic students could hardly have escaped them, the subjects such as issues related to religious freedom, church and state relations, the autonomy of the church and discussions of religion and science are totally ignored.

Thus, the leadership of the nationalistic mobilization was not primarily theologically or religiously motivated; but it is important to notice that it acted in cooperation with the clergy in Iceland. Furthermore, its ideology was in harmony with the religious tradition of the people on one hand and with the New Orthodoxy of the younger generation of theologians from the University of Copenhagen on the other.³ It was this generation of theologians which, at about mid-century, assumed the leadership of the Church of Iceland.

In comparison to the popular revivals of the other Nordic countries in the first half of the 19th century, we see that the Scandinavian revivals were primarily religiously motivated. The latter are characterized by their pietistic reaction to the Rationalistic Establishment and the attempts to eradicate popular religious literature and bring about changes which downplayed the role of orthodox purity among the common people. These revivals were often organized as meetings outside the framework of the State Church and the private sphere of the household and were condemned by the authorities as in violation of the established social and political order (H. Koch 1954: 102ff; K. Banning 1960: 13ff; O. Overgaard :27ff: A. Aarflot :115ff; P. Thyssen :7ff /no year given/).

During the first phase of the political nation building process in Iceland, from 1830 to 1850, the Nationalistic revival had certain social and political functions similar to the religious movements in Scandinavia. Both movements were reactions to the Rationalistic Establishment and both mobilized a broader strata of people into what might be referred to as the prelude to a democratic nation building process (S. Lundkvist 1977: 135ff;). The Icelandic revival was dominated by nationalistic and political overtones whereas the dominant theme in the other Nordic countries was centered around religious and theological issues.

The Scandinavian movements opposed the Church which represented the religious framework of the Rationalistic Establishment. The official religious system served to legitimate the hierarchical social order based on a vertical structure of social solidarity, which accounts for their opposition towards the integrated church and state. On the local level the

conflict was directed towards the clergy who, in comparison to the Icelandic clergy, enjoyed a much higher economic and social position than did their farmer parishioners. In Iceland, the clergy, except for higher-ups, was not affected by Rationalism, and as for social and economic matters, they were on a level much closer to the farming population which placed them in the position of leadership in the popular revival of both political and social character.

5.4 THE CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUE AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF THE CLERGY⁴

The political events of 1850-1851 constituted a turning point in the centre building process and affected the entire political development throughout the century. As will be shown more clearly in Chapter 6, this turning point was even crucial for the plausibility structure of the official theological legitimations. Therefore, a rather detailed examination of these events must be presented as a background to the analysis of the connection between religious differentiation and the political nation building process in Iceland.

The end of the Absolute Monarchy and the establishment of a constitution and parliament in Denmark in 1848-1849, aroused the expectations of the Icelanders.

Jon Sigurðson wrote an essay on the consequences of these events for Iceland and its relation to the Danish state. This essay, (*Hugvekja til Íslendinga*), which was published in *Ný félagsrit* (1848), should be regarded as the political programme for the Nationalist movement for decades to come. In the essay he stated that the decision of the Danish King, Fredrick VII, to renounce his Absolute Power meant that the national rights of Iceland should be restored in accordance with the definitions of the Old Treaty between Iceland, as a free country, and the King of Norway in 1264. The fact that Norway and Denmark came under common rule in 1390 did not alter the formal relationship between the Icelandic nation and the King. Accordingly, Iceland was now to become a sovereign state in union with Denmark. Neither the Danish parliament nor the Danish government could assume legislative or executive power over Iceland because there never existed a treaty between the Danish nation and Iceland which could legitimize such an arrangement. It was maintained in conjunction with the King's renunciation of absolute power, that Iceland would negotiate with him concerning the constitution and a separate government.

On 23 September, 1848, a Royal letter was published which included promises that a decision regarding the relationship between Iceland and Denmark would not take place before a National Convention in Iceland had been given the opportunity to express its opinion. The decree was greeted in Iceland with enthusiasm. Already during the summer of 1848 a free national meeting had been organized at Þingvellir, the first of several Þingvellir Conventions to be held in order to unite the people and express the will of the majority on the constitutional issue.

A new paper, *Þjóðlífur* (see Chapter 5.3 above), was founded in 1848 for the purpose of supporting the fundamentalist national policy and soon

became an influential organ of the political movement. Its first editor was the pastor Sveinbjörn Hallgrímsson, one of the most active national liberals during these years. The chief organizer of the first Þingvellir Convention was the dean Hannes Stephensen, also a member of Alþing (Jón Sigurðsson resided in Copenhagen). He was the leading political organizer of the most intransigent nationalists in the country until his death in 1856.

Elections to the National Convention in Reykjavík were held in 1850, but the convention which was to have taken place that summer was postponed until the following year. By then, the attitude of the Danish authorities toward Icelandic national rights had changed markedly, mostly due to the problems they had had with the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. Furthermore, the conservatives throughout Europe were gaining strength, and liberal and constitutional governments were removed from power in several countries.

At the National Convention held in Reykjavík in 1851, the representative of the Danish authorities (the Governor General) introduced a bill suggesting, among other things, that the Danish constitution become legally binding in Iceland. This measure implied that Iceland, as a special region (amt) within the Danish state, would have its own local government and limited authority in certain matters, e.g. financial. In other words, Iceland would have, in practice, little more than colonial status.

The suggestion caused a split among the Icelandic delegates to the convention with the higher officials, appointed by the King (in practice by the Danish Government), proposing a compromising amendment in an effort to avoid confrontation with the government. The majority was in favour of rejecting the government proposition completely and writing a new one based on the premises of the fundamentalist nationalist policy laid down by Jón Sigurðsson who led the group at the convention. However, before the convention could vote on the issue the meeting was adjourned by the Governor General. This resulted in an appeal to the King written by a majority of the convention delegates in conjunction with one of the King's own elect (Pastor Halldór Jónsson) protesting the procedure and requesting a new convention. Of the 37 elected delegates 13 were clergymen; 3 of the 6 Royally appointed delegates were also clergymen.

In his report to the Government, the Governor General accused nine members for leading illegal agitation and provocation of public order. Among these were included Jón Sigurðsson and 8 officials; 4 clergymen, 3 district sheriffs and one physician. Two of the sheriffs lost their posts and the others were threatened with expulsion.

The official National Convention left the constitutional issue and the legal status of Iceland unsolved, but the Danish Government remained the highest authority for all Icelandic matters and one of its ministers became the Minister of Iceland. The Governor General was subordinate to him but neither was responsible to Alþing nor to any other authority in Iceland. The relation of Iceland to Denmark was not legally defined until in 1871 with the unilateral passing of legislation by the Danish Parliament against the majority will of Alþing. On the basis of these laws a constitution was

introduced in Iceland in 1874, "given", as it were, to the Icelandic nation by the King, in which Alþing was granted legislative and financial authority in such matters as were determined "internal" for Iceland by the Danish authorities. The legislative power of Alþing was restricted even further since the Danish Government, on behalf of the King, could refuse to authorize laws agreed upon by Alþing. Until 1904, one of the ministers of the Danish Government still held the post of Minister of Iceland. For the office, special knowledge of Icelandic affairs or the language was not required. The minister was responsible only to the Danish Parliament.

This development was naturally quite contrary to the objectives of the national political movement. The Danish constitution was not legal in Iceland and the King still had absolute power over Iceland according to the definition of the fundamental nationalists. They had the support of nearly all of Iceland. Jón Sigurðsson and his group was unwilling to compromise what they felt were the basic legal rights of the Icelandic nation. This intransigent policy continued after 1880 under the heading of the Revisionists who wanted to revise the constitution of 1874 and the position of Iceland within the state on the basis of the national claims suggested by Jón Sigurðsson.

The Royally appointed members of Alþing constituted the opposition. They were elected by the Government among the higher officials in Iceland who did not want to press the issue farther than what they thought the Danish authorities would accept. The resultant position caused a deadlock in Icelandic politics which held more or less throughout the 19th century. Attempts were made to break the deadlock by certain members who, together with some of the Royally appointed, tried to reach a compromising alternative to the proposals of the fundamentalists. All such attempts failed, however, until 1897 (see below), because they were not supported by the majority of Alþing and because those politicians supporting the compromises had trouble being reelected.

The free National Conventions at Þingvellir continued as an independent political institution along side of the official political system. There were 18 such conventions; the first in 1848 and the last in 1907. Nine of them were headed by clergymen who were well represented among the participants. The clergy also comprised a significant share of the elected members of Alþing from 1845 to 1930, which is seen in Table 5.2.

The table indicates that for the first three decades, nearly one out of every four elected members was a clergyman, and that during the following four decades the clergy remained a considerable part, after which, in the 1920s they became a minority group of 7 percent.

The clergy comprised a much larger group than the civil officials during the first period and somewhat larger during the second. Only a few district sheriffs were elected to Alþing during the first period. They played a greater role during the last two decades of the 19th century. One reason for this was the government's hold on them, which was demonstrated following the Convention of 1851 with the non-tolerant stance of the government towards higher officials of the civil administration who acted contrary to official policy. This is indicated in Table 5.1 which shows

that there were no district sheriffs or higher officials among the agents for Ný félagsrit in 1856.

Table 5.2 Elected Members of the Alþing, 1845-1930, by Occupational Status

Occupation	1845-73	1875-1918	1919-1930
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Clergy	18 (23)	28 (18)	6 (7)
High Civil Officials	5 (6)	26 (16)	14 (17)
Farmers	43 (56)	58 (36)	25 (31)
Commercial dir. and Merchants	2 (3)	13 (8)	17 (21)
Others	9 (12)	34 (21)	19 (23)
Total	77 (100)	159 (99)	81 (99)

Source: B. Tobiasson 1952. Figures for the periods 1845-73 and 1875-1918 were constructed by O. R. Grímsson 1970:89 and 334.

Another reason for this was that the rank and file electors distrusted these officials who were considered too loyal to the Danish authorities (O. R. Grímsson 1970:110 and 295). The general attitude among the farmers was that the clergy was more understanding and useful to them socially and politically than were the sheriffs (see Chapter 3.5).

Until the administrative change of 1904, two of the six Royally appointed members of Alþing were clergymen, usually the Bishop and President of the Theological Seminary. In the beginning there were 20 elected members, 30 in 1874 and since 1916, when composed only of elected members, there were 40.

Except for those royally appointed, the clergy, as a rule, supported the policy of J. Sigurðsson in Alþing. The only noteworthy exception to this was the "middle group" which, from 1869-1873, included three or four clergymen. This group suggested compromise amendments to the constitutional bill of the fundamentalists and on several occasions voted together with the "government group". During this time the constitutional issue was interlinked with the problems of the financial relations between Iceland and Denmark.

Again, in 1889, an attempt was made in Alþing to brake the deadlock in the constitutional question by a group called the "Compromisers". Their aim was to gain increased power for Alþing by backing down on some of the Fundamentalists' claims. This, however, did not receive much support from the clergy with only one or two favouring it. The measure was also rejected by a large majority of the local political gatherings.

Towards the end of the 1890s, growing dissatisfaction with the politica

deadlock especially among the younger generation of politicians created a basis for alternative strategies. The uncompromising Revisionist group insisted on their bill being agreed upon by the Alþing despite common knowledge that it would be rejected by the Government. So the political deadlock continued to hinder the necessary administrative and economic improvements.

The younger politicians were more attracted to newer ideas concerning economic and social development as means of achieving national development and independence. One of these, Valtýr Guðmundsson, lecturer at the University of Copenhagen, negotiated with the Government in 1896 in an effort to meet some of the demands of Icelandic politicians especially for a separate minister responsible for the Alþing but with residence in Copenhagen. Half the members of Alþing supported the proposition (the group was referred to as the "Valtýrists"), and in 1901 a majority approved of the proposition. The former political blocks in the constitutional issue were broken; there was no longer a large group of Fundamentalists on the one hand nor the small minority of Government supporters on the other. Many of the younger leftist oriented intellectuals, who had been influenced by Leftist ideas and the "Realistic" world-view in Copenhagen (see Chapter 6.5.3) supported the policy of V. Guðmundsson.

Various factions united in an effort to oppose the Valtýrists in Alþing, and formed the "Home-Rule Party". The clergy was represented on both sides: in 1897 the former had seven clergymen and the latter four.⁵

Even after Iceland got a separate minister with residence in Reykjavík and responsible to Alþing, the main topic of Icelandic politics continued to concern the relationship between Iceland and Denmark. The general issue was the relation of the Minister of Iceland to the Danish Government and the Danish State Council. The real issue seems to have been whether or not Iceland was an independent country.

A new group of fundamentalists appeared in 1903, called the "National Guards", which received increasing support. In 1908 it merged with a larger group of politicians in opposition to the Home-Rule Party, many of whom were former supporters of the Valtýrist policy. This union formed the Independence Party, a name later used by the United Right Wing Party of Iceland founded in 1930. One of the founders of the National Guards was a pastor and it received support from some other politically active clergymen.

The constitutional issue was finally brought to a head in 1918 when Iceland became a sovereign state in union with Denmark. By this time Icelandic party politics began reflecting the interests of the different social and economic classes and strata (urban-rural, working-class bourgeoisie). Until this time, the political parties and groups were centered around individual members of the Alþing and without mass organizations. The new political parties, however, more or less had bases among interest groups outside Alþing. Special political associations were founded mainly in Reykjavík which constituted the platforms of the new political parties. The role of the clergy in the new parties was quite insignificant and as indicated in Table 5.2, the overrepresentation of the clergy in the

Alping diminished at about the same time as the settling of the constitutional issue.

5.5 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC MOBILIZATION

In Chapter 2.2 we discussed Iceland's undeveloped farming economy and the lack of internal organizational structure for economic improvement. Among the reasons for the situation were poor communications, general poverty among the population and an apathetic attitude in social matters.

Related to the onset of the political mobilization we can observe the foundation of societies among the common people aimed at improving the situation. The first societies lasted only a few years and the process of mobilization of the broader stratum was quite slow, but they were essential preludes to more stable organizational structures of the agricultural and trading societies which developed in the latter half of the 19th century. These societies were important for the training of local leaders and representatives of national organizations which was one of the basic factors of the economic development since the end of the 19th century. Among others, reading societies and temperance societies should be mentioned for their part in general social improvements and in helping to activate the masses for participation in the social and political system.

The Temperance Movement was introduced into Iceland in the 1840s in a fashion similar to that of the Icelandic Literary Society (see Chapter 5.2). The first society was established among the Icelandic intellectuals in Copenhagen and in Iceland through a letter of recommendation from the Bishop to the clergy, urging them to start temperance societies in their parishes (Fjölnir VII 1844:63). In response, several societies got under way but didn't last long. The 1870s saw renewed interest also this time initiated by the clergy. The interest was nationally and economically motivated: alcohol was imported and it was frequently pointed out that its abuse threatened both the economic and spiritual wellbeing of the nation, and that the profit from the sales went to Danish merchants (Fjölnir VII 1844:59,ff; see also B. Tobiasson 1936: 29ff). Although the clergy became involved in the Socio-economic Movement, the Church leadership was not particularly active in this direction. In this respect, the Temperance Movement was an exception.

Systematic and thorough knowledge of the origins and development of the popular societies in Iceland is lacking except for selected regions and periods.⁶ The majority of literature existing on these societies indicates that, as a general rule, they were initiated and in the beginning lead by the local clergymen. The clergy are usually mentioned as members of the governing committees, and they aided in preparing laws and regulations and drawing up the formal framework of the society's goals and methods. Furthermore, they were active in establishing contacts with other societies on the district and regional levels. The clergy and farmers often worked side by side with the latter gradually taking over more of the leadership positions.

In the early stages the societies were not very specialized. The leaders were often inspired by national politics and saw the local activities as a part of the political and social nation building process. This attitude was also encouraged by the political elite of Copenhagen. Some of the local societies were simply called "Progressive" societies and had several functions, e.g. in agricultural matters and in organizing local library service. The leaders, particularly those who had established contacts between the local societies on the district or regional level, were also politically active supporters of the Fundamentalist policy and were often members of Alþingi. This pattern can be observed in the S-Sþingeyjar district since the middle of the century, and somewhat earlier in the eastern and western districts.

Both the clergy and farmers had interests in improving farm production and terms of trade; thus, it was natural that they become engaged in the establishment of the agricultural and trading societies. It was common opinion in Iceland that the prices of the Danish Trading companies which more or less regularly sent their ships to the small Icelandic trading stations were very disadvantageous for the farmers. The first trading societies were attempts by the local farmers to secure more favourable prices from the merchants through joint efforts and negotiations. Later they managed to establish business relations with agents abroad and thus break the monopoly of the established trading companies of Denmark. Except for those founded in and around Reykjavík, the first trading societies were initiated and lead mostly by the local clergymen.

The Free Trade Law of 1855 improved the situation for the societies, which lead to the establishment of larger companies and wider wholesale contacts abroad which in due time necessitated specialized trading and management agents. There are instances where clergymen served as agents for the societies, leaving on occasions, their ministries in the Church. On the whole however, the leadership functions of the clergy decreased as the companies grew in size and the personnel became more specialized and employed on a full-time basis. In 1882 the first Cooperative Society was founded, signaling the beginning of the Cooperative Movement. This evolved into a Union in 1910 and became the most powerful trading company in the country in the beginning of the 1920s. It established a centre in Reykjavík with a distribution department from which the local rural cooperative societies were served. Several clergymen were among the local representatives of this union but it was directed and organized by specialized functionaries.

The Temperance Union (I.O.G.T.) became very popular following the late 1880s but, in contrast to the previous movements, the clergy were not among the main organizers. The leadership roles were assumed by craftsmen and civil servants. Nevertheless, the organization included several clergymen and the resolutions of the Official Clergy Meetings indicate that the movement was supported by a majority of the clergy.

The clergy held its leadership position longest in the Agricultural Organization. The number of the local societies increased during the 1880s and they received support from a national fund. In 1899 about 115 estab-

lished local societies formed a national union, The Icelandic Agricultural Union. Two persons who played crucial roles in this process were teachers at the Theological Seminary, and one of them, Þórhallur Bjarnarson, served as the president of the Union from 1901 to 1907. His contributions to farming and agricultural legislative reforms in Alþing made him the most prominent leader of the agricultural improvements. The Union was the central interest organization of the farmers and was institutionalized as a consultative body to Alþing and the Government.

Upon becoming bishop in 1908, Bjarnarson was succeeded by another clergyman as president of the Union, but remained on the governing board until his death in 1916. The new president left his ministry upon assuming the presidency as a full time occupation.

5.6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In general one might characterize the 19th century social mobilization in Iceland as not having perpetrated any significant social differentiation or cleavages between social groups in the country. It did not result in increased separation or differentiation of church and society. On the contrary, in many respects it appears that the already strong bonds between the two were actively reinforced during the first phase of the social mobilization process, i.e. up to 1880, and in some areas, until the turn of the century.

In this context it is important to observe that in the beginning of the political mobilization (1830-1850), the Nationalists favoured theological and religious ideas which were close to the religious understanding of the common people and the majority of the clergy. The clergy served as an intermediary link between the political elite in Copenhagen and the farming population of Iceland. They were in a position to function as leaders of the social mobilization of the broad spectrum of society and to lead the initial construction of an independent and indigenous institutional structure on which the Icelandic centre building process took place. One reason for this was their Icelandic education (Chapter 3.2) and consequential national outlook, and another was their comparatively independent position in the administration as compared to civil officials, due mainly to their source of income not coming from the state.

The clergy represented the interests of the majority of the people in their leadership functions in both political and social issues. The object and purpose of the various local societies were, on the whole, unquestioned by all social groups in Iceland. In their broad role, the clergy represented a homogeneous population on both the local and national levels; therefore, their secular activities did not interfere with their role as religious and spiritual figures since there existed no socio-economical basis for these functions to be associated with social conflict. Many clergymen could combine these different functions in such a manner that it afforded them an undisputed position as community leaders in almost every respect.

Even though the majority of the politically active clergy were more independent than were the civil officials vis-a-vis the Danish authorities, they were not in a position to alienate themselves from the official Establishment to which they belonged as servants of the State Church. In this respect the political position of the clergy served as a consolidating factor in the political and social mobilization, ensuring this process of a relatively harmonious development, free from disruptions which would have retarded its progression in time.

The indigenous political and social movements did not become a base for anti-clerical attitudes due mainly to the leadership and active participation of the clergy. As will be shown in the next chapter, this is crucial for the understanding of the differentiation process in Iceland.

With the increased differentiation of the social movements and organizations, the active roles of the clergy gave way to the specialization of experts and professionals. Thus, the clergy no longer occupied leading positions on the district or national levels.

On the national level the constitutional issue and related matters united the nation against an external force. In economical matters the Danish merchants were considered foreign elements. And against this background the active participation of the clergy in the rural trading societies did not arouse controversies or conflicts of interest between social groups in the parishes. But with the appearance of more important internal issues on the political scene in the 1920s and 1930s, e.g. rural vs. urban interests, class conflicts and different political ideologies, the political basis of the clergy came to an end. Towards the end of the 19th century, an indigenous class of merchants and entrepreneurs developed (see Chapter 2.4) which became an important economic and political factor. By then, politics was no longer the conflict-free area it once had been. This was part of the increasing differentiation and growing pluralism of in the Icelandic society.

The disengagement of the clergy from direct political and social involvement appeared to follow a specific pattern. It began initially in Reykjavik in matters of trading. The parish pastors in Reykjavik had not concerned themselves with the establishment of trading societies but they did participate in local and national politics until 1890. The clergy remained active longest in the agricultural sector which was natural considering their social and economical status.

Notes to Chapter 5.

1. N. Ólafsdóttir 1961: 14; J. Jónsson 1955: 321-327. The records of Þorgeir Guðmundsson reveal this network of contacts with the clergy who aided in the distribution. The network started in the late 1820s and lasted until the late 1840s: JS,518 4 to.
2. This society set out as guardian of the pure Icelandic language and to publish Icelandic literature for the common people, textbooks for the schools and more qualified and classical works in Icelandic literature

and history. In addition, official material was published including statistics, laws and regulations. Though this society was not officially a political society, it carried out important functions in the process of nation-state building in Iceland. In 1911 the two separate departments were united with the centre in Reykjavík and, although its political role had become insignificant, it continued according to its original intentions. Upon its founding in 1816, the Bishop, via the Deans, urgently recommended the clergymen's support of the society. Leading clergymen were normally a part of the administrative committee in Iceland and from 1816 to 1868 the position of presidency was occupied without interruption by a member of the clergy (HIB 1867: 60; HIB 1916). During the first year of existence, 124 clergymen joined the society (Isl Sagnablöð 1826).

3. In *Ný félagsrit*, short references indicate that the editors in 1840s at least supported theological views similar to T. Sæmundsson. (N féllr IV 1844: 115-131; *ibid* V 1845: 135-138; *ibid* VI, 1846: 145f).
4. The following section is based on the following sources: S. Kristjánsson 1948 and 1981; Þ. Gíslason 1966; E. Árnórsson 1949; G. Karlsson 1965 and 1972; P. E. Ólason 1929; B. Tobiasson 1952; O. R. Grímsson 1970; B. Þórðarson 1951; Þ. Thoroddsen 1908; B. Jónsson 1966; Nféllr XII, 1852.
5. Before the Guðmundsson proposal could be carried through, events in Denmark interrupted the process. The Venstre Government, which came into power in 1901, was willing to grant Iceland a minister of Icelandic affairs with both residency in Iceland and responsibility before the Alþing. This was more than the Valtýrists had asked for and afforded the opposing Home-Rule Party a majority position in the Alþing. The party's leader, Hannes Hafstein, became the first Icelandic Minister in 1904.
6. Particularly the district of S-Þingeyjarsýsla has been thoroughly investigated (G. Karlsson 1977). A rather extensive presentation of the social and political organizations of the western part of the country is also available (L. Kristjánsson 1953 and 1955). The following presentation is based also on A. Sigurjónsson 1944; Þ. Jóhannesson 1937, 1943 and 1957).

6. Religious Differentiation and Reorientation

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters we have focused on the role of the church and clergy in the local community and the role of the clergy in the mobilization of the population. In Chapter 6 we will deal more concretely with the process of differentiation or laicization as defined by Dobbelaere. This process, or these processes, occur on the various socio-structural levels including the institutional and administrative levels, and are expressed as well on both the macro and micro levels.

The cultural and ideological levels comprise the legitimations of the social order along with the inherent values and beliefs. In this context, the process of differentiation is accompanied by the breakdown of overarching claims and monopoly of the official religious ideology. Several aspects of the process of differentiation on the local level were analysed in Chapter 4. An attempt will be made here to relate the processes of political nation-building and religious differentiation at the national level.

As was mentioned in Chapter 1 the difficulty with many studies of secularization is that they lack a sufficient definition or description of the base-line of analysis, i.e. the role of religious legitimations and the status of religious institutions in society prior to the changes implicit in secularization (Glasner 1977: 69). Accordingly, the analysis of the previous chapters is historically oriented. This chapter will focus on the theological legitimation and its plausibility structure, using as a starting point the middle of the 19th century. First, the State Church complex and its theological legitimation will be examined with attention focused on its global claims especially as they refer to social order and "world-view".

As described in previous chapters, the plausibility structure of the official religious model was a homogeneous culture and a relatively undifferentiated social structure. In a society where there exists a state church monopoly in religious matters and where the clergy occupies a crucial position as agents of the moral order and social control, new religious orientations and ideas constitute a potential threat to the existing order. The new groups inevitably and perhaps somewhat consciously question the established order and are, therefore, likely to be opposed by the ruling elements of society. We will analyse how these new and "alien" elements succeeded or failed to mobilize social and political resources in Iceland.

The obvious threats to the religious hegemony were the new religious

sects and foreign denominations, but so were, too, principles such as religious freedom, democratization and the free press.

6.2. THE THEOLOGICAL LEGITIMATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

The late 1840s and early 1850s saw the consolidation of the conservative Danish church policy called the Mynster/Martensen policy, named after J. P. Mynster, Bishop of Seeland, and Professor H. L. Martensen who succeeded Mynster as Bishop of Seeland in 1854. Later, the policy was referred to as the Third Church Policy Programme in Denmark; the other two being Grundtvigianism and the Inner-Mission.

It was particularly Martensen's task to formulate the policy's theological legitimations. The primary object of this orthodox theology was to defend the religious homogeneity of the country and the unaltered relations between the state and church. The Programme endeavoured to maintain many aspects of the previous church of Absolutism (H. C. Dela 1960:155 ff). The theology as codified by Martensen represented an extraordinary capacity to integrate the orthodox theological dogmas of the Church and intellectual reflections into a harmonious system. Martensen was highly influenced by German idealism and Hegelian philosophy. His basic principle, taken from Hegelian dialectics, assumed the final unity of all things as determined by the eternal will of God. In this theory there was no contradiction between Christian faith and science; both were expressions of the will of the Almighty. Philosophy (science) was seen as the intellectual expression and interpretation of the essence of religion. Needless to say, the Evangelical Lutheran doctrine was the only true basis on which to build one intellectual base line (H. Lundsteen 1960: 279 ff; A. R. Vidler 1977: 29ff).

This speculative dogma of the unity of church, nation and state assumes an eschatological dimension; the synthesis becomes the basis on which to realize the Kingdom of God, the Christian state. The church was the educator of the nation, and church matters were thus highly relevant for the state authorities. The state could only be a moral order if based on Christian principles. The Evangelical Lutheran Faith was the state religion and the unifying symbol was the Crown. In times of uprisings and revolutions as during the years 1848 and 1849, the role of the King was, according to Martensen, to safeguard the bonds and the common basis of the church and state (H. Lundsteen 1960: 286).

Both Mynster and Martensen expected the state to use its power to enforce religious homogeneity (e.g. to baptize infants with the use of violence if necessary). At stake, according to them, was the redemption of society. In addition, the programme opposed the democratization of the church and disfavoured increased autonomy in the form of a church assembly; instead, the authority of the bishops was emphasized (see H. Lundsteen 1960: 290 ff; P. G. Lindhardt 1958: 26-33).

Thus, theology made global claims for intellectual legitimations and for social order as well. As an ideology it had no understanding of conflicts or clashes between the clergy and civil officials or between

religion and science.

In Denmark the Grundtvigians and the Inner-Mission in the beginning constituted, in many respects, the opposition to church policy and theology, and because of popular support, soon gained considerable influence over religious and church life. In the 1850s the Danish Church had to face the critique of Kirkegaard, and in the 1860s, the intellectual debate, which dealt with the issue of the irreconcilability of religion and science, faith and knowledge, resolved that the Martensen synthesis was no longer satisfactory for the intellectual milieu. During the 1870s, G. Brandes became a major figure in disputes over these issues by introducing French Positivism together with English Empiricism and Utilitarianism which made the former theological constructions appear more and more irrelevant and untenable as intellectual solutions to the problems of the time (P. G. Lindhardt 1958: 169ff; H. Lundsteen 1960:292 ff; H. Hertel and S. M. Kristensen 1973: 53ff).

The Third Church Policy Programme in Denmark was actually the only church policy in Iceland during the second-half of the 19th century (J. Helgason 1922:185-6). It was Petur Petursson, the first president of the Theological Seminary in Reykjavik, who introduced Martensenian theology into Iceland. He was the most influential figure of the Icelandic Church in the latter half of the 19th century, being ordained Bishop of Iceland by Martensen in 1866 and serving until 1889. Thus, he was the teacher and supervisor of several generations of clergymen in Iceland. Throughout the 19th century, the teachers at the seminary followed the course of study already recommended at the establishment of the school (Kbl VI,5 1896; N Kbl 1919, 19; B. Kristjánsson 1947: 51f, 79, 113, 163-164, 51-52; J. Helgason 1922: 185f).¹

The role of the King as a unifying symbol and as head of the State Church is crucial in explaining why the conservative Third Church Policy Programme was the only programme in Iceland. The political reason for this was the emphasis that the fundamental Nationalists injected into the authority of the King as the Absolute Ruler of Iceland (Chapter 5.4). Thus, even though based on different reasons, the Martensenian theologians and the fundamental Icelandic Nationalists supported the supremacy of the King and religious homogeneity as the basis of social order. According to the definition of the nationalistic leaders, the opponent of the Icelandic nation-state building was not the King but the Danish Government and the Danish administration.

The Nationalists thus maintained they could be faithful to the King and oppose the government at the same time. Since 1851, the authority of the King was one of the fundamental pillars of their policy for nation-state building. Thus, it was not in their interest to fight the official model of the state religion whose unifying symbol was the Crown. The nationalistic mobilization of the period 1851-1874 was therefore carried out within the hegemony of the state-church religion and, as indicated earlier, it would have been fatal for this political movement to introduce theological disputes leading to a split between the Icelandic clergy and the political elite in Copenhagen. This accounts for the fact that new ideas on issues

concerning religious freedom, religion and science, church-state, etc. in Copenhagen did not appear in the publications of the Icelandic intellectuals. Thus, it seems to have been beneficial for the Icelandic nation-building process to maintain the official religious model of the Danish state as defined by the conservative theology of Martensen.

One item which reveals that the "Church policy" of the fundamental Nationalists and Martensen had important contact points was the vigorous opposition in the Nationalist paper *Þjóðólfur* in the early 1850s against the idea of some Church men to establish a separate Church Assembly in Iceland. It was argued that it was not in the interests of the Icelandic people to have an assembly with legislative authority in church matters along side Alþing, and therewith, differentiate Church matters from other issues (see Árrit Prestaskólans 1850: 185-190: *Þjóðólfur* 1850 and 1854, particularly vol II, 38-39 20/7 1850). This issue was not seriously raised again until the last decade of the 19th century.

Only one of the 19th century Icelandic theologians, Magnús Eiríksson, was critical of Martensenian theology and church policy. This placed him in a very difficult position in Denmark and even more so in Iceland where he never again took up residence after completing his degree at the University of Copenhagen.²

The official religious model expressed an inbuilt scepticism towards all religious activities carried on outside the framework of the household and the regular services of the State Church. An expression of this attitude was the reaction of the religious authorities towards the religious services being held in a public hall in Reykjavík in the late 1870s (see for instance *Þjóð* XXVIII, 9 28/2 1876; L. Kristjánsson 1962: 187-196 and 1963: 63ff).

6.3 THE EARLY THREATS AGAINST RELIGIOUS HEGEMONY

Attempts to do away with the religious hegemony of the official state religion model in Iceland and reactions to them will be examined in the following.

6.3.1 The Mormons

The first sectarian group to arrive in Iceland was the Mormons, represented in the beginning by young craftsmen returning home to Vestmannaeyjar in 1851 after having converted to the Mormon faith during their stay in Copenhagen. Several people converted to this religion despite joint efforts by the ecclesiastical and civil authorities to prevent this. Most of the converts were poor people, servants and workers, but among them was one relatively wealthy farmer who had been elected as one of two representatives of Vestmannaeyjar to the National Convention held in Reykjavík in 1851. However, his mandate was recalled when news of his Mormon sympathies became known.

In a letter to the pastor of Vestmannaeyjar, the Dean tried to hinder

the heretics from spreading their religion to the mainland by issuing orders that no one was to leave the island without first declaring their intentions. To enforce this an official passport was required, stamped with a certification that the bearer was faithful to the Evangelical Lutheran Religion.

Charges were brought and in the ensuing proceedings the local judge maintained that the Mormons trespassed the exclusive office of the minister of the State Church with their religious activities. The Mormons defended themselves with reference to the religious freedom granted by the Danish constitution in 1849, but according to the Icelandic officials, it was not in force in Iceland. The Danish officials might have acted otherwise had the case been brought before the highest authorities in Copenhagen, but the Mormons were isolated in Vestmannaeyjar. In addition, what made the Mormons even less interested in pressing the issue was their departure for Utah. In all, about 100 Icelanders emigrated to Utah in the latter half of the 19th century, though not all were of the Mormon faith (S. M. Johnsen 1946: 126).

The Mormons did not constitute a real threat to the theological legitimation of the church-state complex. The general response to their mission was public dislike and scorn. The official model was able to consolidate itself in warding off this intrusion. The last indications of the Mormons disappeared around the turn of the century and, thus, they did not become a part of the religious pattern of Iceland in the 20th century. In one respect, however, the Mormons did create an issue in relation to the differentiation process. In 1873, a couple was married by a Mormon minister whereupon the local pastor inquired of his superiors their position concerning the legality of the marriage and actions to take. The Bishop condemned the couple's cohabitation as illegal and immoral. The Governor of the South decided the relationship was to be terminated but this met with difficulties. The couple then requested that the local pastor should marry them which was rejected because of their religion. The case was settled by a Royal letter in which the District Sheriff was assigned to perform a civil ceremony. In this letter reference was made to a Danish law concerning civil marriage (13/4 1851), a law which had never been announced in Iceland. The decision was later legalized with reference to the Icelandic Constitution of 1874. According to discussions of the matter in the press, it was declared that the Danish minister had broken Icelandic law in this case by his reference to the Danish regulations concerning civil marriage (Isaf II, 26 17/12 1875; *ibid* II, 30 8/1 1876; *ibid* III, 3 11/12 1876).³

6.3.2 The Catholics

During the 1850s another religious threat to the official model appeared. In 1854 the Pope established a special Apostolic District which included the Arctic countries. The prefect of the district acquainted himself with the Icelandic students in Copenhagen with the result that three of the students converted to the Catholic faith. The first Catholic priest (a

Frenchman) arrived in the Summer of 1857 together with one of the students. The priest settled in the east coast village of Seyðisfjörður and his Icelandic companion returned to his studies under the auspices of the Catholic Church. The following year another priest arrived to help develop the mission which was partially motivated by the presence of many French fishermen in the area.

Initially the Catholic priests did little to spread their faith. They studied the Icelandic language and acted as negotiators between French fishermen and the local population. Soon, however, the reaction of the local people, press and authorities forced them into a more active discourse (A. Sigurjónsson 1957:256).

The very presence of the Catholics aroused attention throughout the entire country and the Bishop reacted quickly to the news. He urged the local clergy to be alert of Catholic priests whom he assumed to be the dangerous Jesuits (which they were not). Furthermore, the Bishop required that reports of their activities be made and encouraged the clergy to inform of any attempts at converting people to the Catholic faith. In a letter to the Governor of the North and East, assistance was requested in the clergy's defense against the Catholics and other foreign religions. This was, according to him, of utmost importance in order to avoid social and cultural disintegration (G. F. Guðmundsson 1975: 20-23).

An application from the Catholic priests to build a hospital in Seyðisfjörður in order to attend to their sick and injured countrymen was met with suspicion. The Bishop referred to the fact that the Danish laws on religious freedom had not been introduced in Iceland, and was supported in this by the Danish authorities (T stjm Isl I: 284-85). In 1859 the priests moved their residence to a farm purchased in the vicinity of Reykjavík and built a chapel. The activities were, however, closely observed by the authorities and when Icelanders started attending the Catholic services the parish pastor notified the sheriff and a general order was released declaring that religious services could not be held except for the crews of foreign vessels (T stjm Isl II: 56-60, 207f).

The Justice Benedikt Sveinsson, who succeeded Jón Sigurðsson as leader of the fundamental Nationalists in the 1880s, wrote an essay entitled The Rights of the Catholics in this Country, which he published in his paper Íslendingur in 1860. His interpretation of the laws and regulations was extremely restrictive concerning the rights of potential dissenters in Iceland.⁴

As a rule the press condemned the Catholic mission and warned the public against letting themselves be deceived by the priests. Even the national liberal papers were negative towards their presence and regretted the discourse between the Icelandic intellectuals and the Catholics in Copenhagen (see for instance Þjóð IX, 28 6/6 1857; *ibid* X, 27 12/6 1858; *ibid* X, 33-34 23/8 1858). Some of the very papers which so passionately proclaimed the right of free press for themselves were in favour of revoking the freedoms of speech and publication of the Mormons and Catholics (V. Þ. Gíslason 1972:112).

It may be concluded that the Catholics, no more than the Mormons, succeeded

in breaking the religious hegemony of the State Church. The difference between the two seems to be that the Catholics received more sympathy from among some intellectuals. Their presence, at least in part, raised the issue of religious freedom and civil rights.

6.3.3 Petitions for Religious Freedom

The first serious requests for religious freedom can be traced to the free thinker, Einar Ásmundsson, who sympathised both with the Catholics and with M. Erikssons fight against the religious hegemony. He initiated two petitions sent to Alþing in 1863 and 1865. They did not arise out of earlier religious conflicts, nor from the wants of any Icelandic dissenters. Both in 1863 and 1865 he tried to persuade the District Meeting of South-Pingeyjar to agree upon the resolutions. When both requests were denied by a large majority, Ásmundsson went about collecting individual supporters to sign the petitions. For the 1863 petition, 22 names were signed and for the 1865 one, 10 signed. Quite clearly, at least part of the reason why the issue was raised was due to the difficult position of the Catholic priests. The 1863 petition made specific mention of their civil rights.

The reactions of the large majority of Alþing indicate that they interpreted the request for religious freedom as a threat against the official religious model. To them religious homogeneity was equal to the moral order of society, and the authority of the Church was, similarly, seen as the basis of the social order. The 1863 request was turned down by a 20 to 3 vote and the 1865 request by a 21 to 2 vote (Alþt 1863 I: 81f; 1865 II: 171).

At the onset of the discussions in 1863, the government representative seemed favourable to the request and urged the assembly to analyze the issue closely and to appoint a special committee to deal with the matter. The representative spoke of the religious freedom already introduced in Denmark and referred to the "well known liberalistic attributes of the Icelanders" expressing the hope that Alþing would not endanger that reputation (Alþt 1863 II:102). Apart from the King's deputies, three other speakers seemed in favour of the request. Their argument was that tolerance and freedom of religion were quite in harmony with the basic values of Christian teachings and principles which every civilized society should institutionalize. And if this request were rejected by Alþing, they maintained, the civil rights of the Icelandic people in general would be in jeopardy.

But the majority of the speakers in opposition to this request disagreed that the passage of new legislation in Iceland was needed to ensure the principle of freedom of religion, at least not for the time being. Furthermore, they argued that it could be dangerous for the spiritual well-being of the people to introduce such laws which might even cause social problems. Some claimed that the petition was a concealed attempt to introduce Catholicism into Iceland.

Justice Benedikt Sveinsson opposed the idea using the concept "freedom"

in relation to the request and encouraged everyone to "try harder to live up to the principles of his own religion before seeking in blindness for other ones" (ibid:105).

Justice Jón Pétursson claimed that it was not within the jurisdiction of Alþingi to recommend to the King that he institutionalize religious freedom in the land since the King was the supreme authority of the Church and the guardian of the Evangelical Lutheran faith. To make such a recommendation would be to ask the King to act contrary to his obligations toward the Church (ibid:106 f).

The Bishop's attitude was that religious freedom was not really lacking in Iceland; the fact that there were laws on religious freedom in Denmark and in other countries did not imply that Iceland would necessarily have to follow along. According to the president of the Theological Seminary, the request was much too premature for Icelandic conditions, and in reference to the situation in Denmark, he claimed that the Church there was much worse off following the establishment of religious freedom (ibid:103, 113). Similar reactions were expressed by other clergymen.

Alþingi reacted even more negatively towards the matter in 1865. There was no public reaction to the issue of religious freedom; it was not a contemporary issue, nor was it linked to domestic social or political interests. During the 1860s and 1870s, only very few articles concerning religious freedom appeared in the Icelandic papers and magazines, and the few which did appear were usually pseudonymous.⁵

Religious freedom was introduced in Iceland together with the Constitution of 1874. The issue was accepted in theory without much discussion, but was overshadowed by other constitutional questions of a political and national character. The leaders of the Church accepted the matter without opposition or discussion. However, opposition to the practical consequences of the newly-granted religious freedom continued as will be discussed in the remainder of the chapter.

6.4 THE PLAUSIBILITY STRUCTURE OF THE SYNTHESIS

We have seen in the preceding discussion how the theological synthesis of the official religious model remained intact at least until the 1880s in Iceland. Neither foreign sects nor impinging Liberalism could break its hegemony and disturb the order of the social system on which it was based. The cultural synthesis legitimated by the official religious system survived longer in Iceland than it did in Denmark.

In the following, some of the main features of the political mobilization and structure of the Icelandic society will be summarized from earlier chapters and examined in relation to the maintenance of the overarching religious ideology referred to above as the theological synthesis of Martensen.

The Icelandic Alþingi turned out to be more conservative in religious matters than the Danish government. Furthermore, some of the Royally

elected members were more liberal than the Nationalist Fundamentalists on several issues. This conservative stand, reflected among the farmers, clergymen and officials (the pillars of the society), surfaced in their attitudes toward the civil rights of the rural labour force (Chapter 4.3.2).

Keeping in mind the role of the clergy in the political as well as the social mobilization into the 1880s, both as local leaders and coordinators at the national level, it is not surprising that these movements and societies did not foster anti-clerical and anti-church sentiments. The fact that the clergy constituted a crucial link between the nationalistic elite in Copenhagen and the rural population in Iceland aided in preventing theological criticism or anti-clericalism interfering with the ideology of the political mobilization.

As already discussed, the political situation forced the fundamental nationalists to emphasise the political authority of the king. No serious politician of the 19th century recommended that the Danish King be denounced in Iceland. The main strategy of Icelandic politics was to play the King against the government. Iceland was a dominated society, but the oppressor was not the King; rather, the Danish government and administration. The King was always held in high esteem by all social categories: farmers, students, intellectuals and officials. In the mind of the Icelanders, God, King and Fatherland formed a natural unity of veneration. The Millenium festivities in 1874 when King Christian IX delivered the constitution to the Icelandic nation was a grandious expression of respect for this trinity.

On the whole, the clergy were very slightly affected by the intellectual and academic environment in Denmark since the 1850s, when the Martensenian theology lost its significance and relevance among Danish intellectuals. The Martensenian synthesis of religion and culture appeared more reasonable in the intellectual milieu of Iceland than that of Denmark. This theology was the ruling one at the Theological Seminary.

In Iceland, nationalistic and political issues dominated the intellectual scene. The education of the Icelandic clergy made it natural for them to identify with the basic themes of the nationalistic ideology, the historical and literary heritage. The Fundamental Nationalists referred to these as the basis of the national identity in the political struggle. The Icelandic intelligentsia focused on the human sciences, philology and history, for political and nationalistic reasons. In the natural science of the 19th century, Icelanders had little to contribute (P. Thoroddsen 1902:188-194; I. Sigurðsson 1981:63). This fact is at least partly expressed in Table 3.2, which shows that none of the Icelanders registered at the University of Copenhagen prior to 1880 in the fields of engineering and natural sciences completed the examination. Of the total 254 Icelandic students at the university, 6 were registered in these disciplines. Fully qualified Icelandic engineers is a phenomenon of the 20th century.

In view of the difficulty for intellectuals without an office within the establishment to provide for themselves as writers and scientists in the Icelandic society, it is quite clear that the Icelandic intellectual

milieu was not likely to foster cleavages between religion and science (i.e. the official religious model and the intellectuals).⁶ The social structure remained undifferentiated and it was in the interests of the Icelandic centre-building process to mobilize the farming population with the help of officials, to the extent that this was possible, given the dependency of the latter on the Danish authorities.

In fact, the principles of the philosophical construction of Martensen were easily integrated with the ideological constitution of the nation-building leadership. His speculative synthesis seemed to fit the relatively undifferentiated institutional structures which constituted the frame of the nation-state building process in Iceland. As long as the legitimization of the official religion model was unquestioned, it was natural for the clergy to engage themselves in social, and political activities. They were, according to the Martensenian philosophy, an integral part of society and culture. In other words, it was advantageous for the political nation-building process that the religious homogeneity of the nation be held intact.

This explains the absence of criticism of the official religious model among the political nation-building leaders and their lack of interest in such matters as religious freedom. But what one also observes in the writings of the political elite is the absence of direct support for the Martensenian theology per se. They seemed not to identify themselves with the content of his message and teachings. It was rather his philosophical synthesis which, due to specific political contingencies, the undifferentiated social structure and the homogenous culture proved beneficial for the political nation-building movement since the middle of the 19th century.

National identity was based on the historical heritage of language and literature and not on religion. It thus becomes more understandable that a conservative Danish theology could constitute the over-arching religious framework of the political nation-building mobilization in Iceland.

Historical records also account for how the Church in Iceland was a part of the framework. The Church constituted de facto a separate unit. The Icelandic bishops were not subordinated to other ecclesiastical authority than the King. Several bishops in the past had been the chief guardians of the Icelandic language, literature and history. Ancient church history showed that Icelandic literature and language had been nurtured and developed within the framework of the church. It was, thus, more the institutional structure of the Church and less the official theology per se which was of importance for national mobilization.

The nationalistic mobilization was, therefore, not likely to be associated with rising involvement in church religion even though the clergy was a crucial factor in the process. What might be expected was the very status quo in this respect during the period treated thus far in this chapter.

6.5 CHANGING CONTEXTS AND NEW FRAMES OF REFERENCE

6.5.1 The Press

The free press was likely to constitute a threat to the monopoly of the State Church in matters of religious and ideological character. Attitudes critical of established values and beliefs, and the presence of new frames of reference made it possible for many sectors of society to form their own opinion in various issues. It has been maintained that the free press and the development of various techniques for the presentation of information in itself was one of the major causes of secularization (B. Wilson 1969: 61ff; O. Chadwick 1977: 37ff). In Denmark, as in other Western European countries, the rights of free publication since the 1850s were increasingly being institutionalized (O. Chadwick 1977: 43).

During the 1880s new religious frames of reference critical of the official religious model were introduced in Iceland. The global claims of the theological legitimations of intellectual and civil issues were seriously questioned. Initially, these new ideologies appeared most forcefully in the press and other publications, in political debates, in Alþing and at public meetings. Processes of differentiation of state and church were set in force, and the motives and legitimations for these forces and interests were to be found in the new frames of reference. In the following the ideological critique of the official religious model and the processes of differentiation will be presented, and attempts will be made to pinpoint the connections between the two spheres.

Table 6.1 Icelandic Papers and Magazines: 1870-1910^a

	1870	1880	1900	1910
Papers ^b	2	6	11	15
Political & Cultural Magazines ^c	4	4	8	14
Religious Magazines ^d	0	1	4	5
Total	6	11	23	34

^a Papers and magazines published by the Icelandic colony in N. America are not included.

^b Only papers that were published more than two years are counted. These were usually published on a bi-weekly basis.

^c These were monthly or annual publications dealing mainly with social, political and cultural matters, and which survived more than one year. Statistics, reports and similar kinds of recurrent publications and institutional yearbooks are not counted here as magazines.

^d These are monthly or annual publications concerning mainly religious and church matters, and which survived more than one year.

Source: B. Kvaran and E. Sigurðsson 1970

The growth of the free press in Iceland is crucial in understanding this development. In 1870 there were only two papers, each published every other week. At the same time, there were four magazines of cultural and political content, three of which were printed in Copenhagen. Relatively few changes are noted in the 1870s except for the establishment of the political paper Isafold in 1874, which in all main respects followed the previous policy in religious and cultural publications (an exception here is that the paper actually supported the civil rights of the Mormons to get married in Iceland).

Several new papers were founded in the 1880s, which furthered the debate about the official religious model. This development continued into the 1890s with the appearance of yet new magazines and papers.

In Table 6.1 the increase in paper and magazine publication until 1910 is shown. These publications provided a basis for a small group of intellectuals to support themselves without having to resort to a position within the state-church establishment. They could, therefore, to some extent carry on discussions independent of the official establishment.

Table 6.2 Places of Publication of Icelandic Papers and Magazines

	1870	1880	1900	1910
Reykjavík:	3	5	15	28
Elsewhere in Iceland & Copenhagen:	3	6	8	6
Total	<u>6</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>34</u>

Sources: B. Kvaran and E. Sigurðsson 1970

Table 6.2 shows that a considerable proportion of the papers and magazines were published elsewhere than in Reykjavík. The table also indicates that Reykjavík increased its proportion, and in 1910 it was clearly the leading centre of Icelandic publications.

6.5.2 Religious Liberalism

The first to expound religious liberalism in the Icelandic press was Rev. Matthías Jökumsson who, in 1875, took over the editorship of Þjóðólfrur. He got inspiration from England and the freer forms of religious devotion observed in this country, which he viewed as a prerequisite for active Christian engagement and betterment. In some respects he presented a critique (though relatively mild) of the Church leadership for its religious conservatism and pacifism. He condemned the deterioration of religious life under the present leadership and asserted that, contrary to the broad opinion, apathy rather than genuine devotion, characterized the

traditional forms of religious life in Iceland. (Þjóð XXVII, 4 19/11 1874; ibid XXVIII, 10 11/3 1876; ibid XXXI, 4 28/1 1879; see also his autobiography, M. Jockumsson 1922: 165ff, 230ff).

The religious liberalism of the last two decades of the 19th century in Iceland was not theological in the sense that it comprised an alternative theology to the orthodoxy of Martensen. It was more the intellectual and religious hegemony of the church and its ineffectiveness as an organization that was the object of the critics. Nevertheless, in reference to Iceland's theological dependency on Denmark, M. Jockumsson suggested that more emphasis be placed on English theology instead.⁷

Another editor who assumed a more radical liberalist position in religious and church matters was Jón Ólafsson, who was influenced by church life in N. American. In his publications (notably Skuld, Þjóðlífur since 1880, Nýja Óldin and Reykjavík) he advocated the separation of church and state, criticizing harshly the official religious model. He also criticized church leadership for reasons similar to those of M. Jockumsson and called for a radical democratization of religious life including the differentiation of church and social institutions at all levels. He especially demanded the separation of religious education from the public school system (see particularly Skuld I, 3-4 14/6 1877; ibid I, 6-7 28/7 1877).

In the 1880s, six papers were founded all of which forwarded the liberalist critique of the official religious model in one form or another. These were Fjallkonan, Suðri, Fróði, Norðurljósið, Austri and Þjóðviljinn. Some of the articles were from time to time associated with the attitudes of free-thinkers and dealt with "religious truths" from the point of view of comparative religion (especially in Fjallkonan from 1884). Included as a segment of these discussions of religion and the church was the Scandinavian High School Movement and its stance towards religion and Christian life. Noteworthy in this connection is the position of the Norwegian writer and liberalist Bjørnstjerne Björnsson. His sympathy for Icelandic cultural traditions and his support of the Icelandic political cause (in the 1870s and 1880s) made him more widely known in Iceland than would otherwise have been the case. During the 1880s, Realism also became a part of the general critique of the official religious model in which many of the themes of the religious liberalists were adopted.

6.5.3 Icelandic Intellectuals and the Realism of G. Brandes

In the early 1880s several Icelandic students became acquainted with the Danish literary critic George Brandes, the most influential propagator of Realism both in literature and as a world-view. Their literary publications of the 1880s, sent from Copenhagen to Iceland, were influenced by the Realism trend.⁸

The Realism-influenced critique of the official religious model hardened in the 1890s, during which time certain anti-clerical attitudes were apparent, although this was not characteristic of the liberal critique. In Norðurljósið, published in Akureyri, and for a few years the

organ of a group of young political activists in the district of S. Þingeyjar (G. Karlsson 1977: 204f), this attitude was marked (especially in Nlj VII, 11 12/6 1892). This was a group of radical patriots whose political program included the separation of church and state (Fróði V, 146 16/1 1885). Among them was a popular novelist, Þorgils Gjallandi, who was influenced by Realism in this respect (A. Sigurjónsson 1945:105 ff; Þ. Helgason 1978:11 and 24).

In 1891, Icelandic students in Copenhagen started a monthly magazine called Sunnanfari which they published until 1897. Among other topics, they wrote on the progress of modern natural science, and occasionally weighed scientific facts against the dogmatic world-view of the conservative church, which offended some Icelandic clergymen (Sunnanf. II, 6 1892; *ibid* III, 11 1894; *ibid* IV, 3 1894; *ibid* IV, 6 1894; *ibid* IV, 7 1895; *ibid* IV, 9 1895; *ibid* V, 2 1895; *ibid* V, 10 1896). In this magazine, one of the students, Þorsteinn Erlingsson⁹, first published his anti-clerical and anti-church (some even said anti-Christian) poems, which also appeared in the periodical Eimreiðin, published in Copenhagen since 1895, and edited by Valtýr Guðmundsson. His poems sparked a major debate concerning religion and science at the turn of the century.¹⁰

G. Brandes was politically and culturally opposed to the Conservative Government and the Danish Establishment. The Icelandic students were attracted to the opposition front against the Estrup Government in particular and associated themselves in general with the radical Leftists. The Icelanders had reason to believe that the Leftists would willingly grant Iceland national and political rights when and if elected to power (Suðri IV, 5 10/2 1886). Around the middle of the 1880s, certain contacts took place between the leftist political groups and the rising Social Democrats in Denmark. This came as a consequence of their common opposition against the anti-democratic government of Estrup (P. Salomonsson 1968:50 ff). Some of the Icelandic students thus came into contact with socialism during their stay in Copenhagen.

On several occasions G. Brandes voiced his sympathy for the Icelandic political cause and his admiration for Icelandic culture and literature. He went so far as to state his preference of being Icelandic rather than Danish which made him a hero among the Icelandic students in Copenhagen (J. Helgason 1926: 54; Eimreiðin XXI, 1915: 124f; Skirnir 1883: 136f). Þjóð LII, 24 23/5 1900; *ibid* LV, 15 11/4 1903; Sam V, 3 1890; Alm þjvf XXX 1903; Dagskrá 6/3 1897). These factors account for the fact that most Icelandic students at the University of Copenhagen during the last two decades of the 19th century adopted a world-view heavily influenced by Realism, and the reason why none remained entirely unaffected, including the theological students as will be shown later (Chapter 7.7).

In accordance with Realism in general, the short-stories and poems of the Icelandic students were thoroughly anti-establishment. They praised, the freedom of the individual and rejected authorities and traditional moral beliefs. Self-respect and self-assertion became virtues and not even sacred norms and sanctions should hinder the individual from personal satisfaction. This was of course quite contrary to the basic principles of

the official religious model and the morality defended by the Church. All popular religious literature authorized by the Church advocated and carried out the indoctrination of humility, self-negation and loyalty to ones superiors. Realism pursued a critical analysis of the social situation and pointed to the failures and hypocrisy of the establishment, and not in the least, of the clergy.

As pursued by Brandes, the socio-political stance emanating from Realism was anti-clerical and even anti-Christian in as much as it found Christianity in disharmony with its ideals (S. M. Kristensen 1980: 171f; S. Einarsson 1948: 71 ff; S. S. Höskuldsson 1965: 476 ff; 694 ff).

6.5.4 The Church Reaction, Church Publications

The rising critique of the official religious model did not go unnoticed. In 1878, two leading clergymen, Rev. Þórarinn Böðvarsson (member of Alþing for many years, 1869-1894) and Rev. Hallgrímur Sveinsson (Bishop from 1889 to 1908 and member of Alþing from 1885-1886 and 1893-1903) founded the magazine Kirkjutiðindi. The endeavour was supported by the Official Meeting of the clergy which desired to maintain the discussion of church matters within the Church (see Þ. Böðvarsson in Fróði IV, 114 12/9 1883). This publication set out to defend the traditional State-Church relations and attempted to construct a churchly response to the increasing critique. Rev. Þórarinn Böðvarsson wrote an essay on state-church relations in which he defended the status quo (Þ. Böðvarsson 1879a). The article gave rise to a debate in which, among others, Jón Ólafsson participated (Skuld III, 21-22 1879).

Some of the debators, and among them a few clergymen, supported differentiation of state and church in several administrative and social sectors and called for increased autonomy for the Church in its own affairs (Fróði IV, 102-107 /April-June/ 1883). Rev. Þórarinn Böðvarsson, who continued writing on the issue even after the discontinuation of Kirkjutiðindi referred to Martensen in his claim that the moral order of society was based on the cooperation of the church and state, and that those demanding separation were either heretics or atheists (Fróði IV, 114-117, 1883). It soon became apparent that the debate was not to be confined within the framework of the Church and the publication ended only after a few numbers.

No other church publication appeared in Iceland until 1891, but in 1885 the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Icelanders in America started a publication concerned with the domestic situation. However, in many respects their critique of the Church raised arguments similar to those expressed by the religious liberals, and they were very severe in their accusations against the Church leadership which they held accountable for the degeneration of Christianity in Iceland (Sam IV, 1 1889; ibid IV, 7-9 1889; ibid V, 1 1890; see also J. Bjarnason 1889 and F. Bergmann 1889). The Icelandic clergymen in N. America were convinced that much of the problem of the religious life in Iceland was to be blamed on the state-church dichotomy, and called for the separation of the two.

Following the discontinuation of Kirkjutiðindi in 1880, the Icelandic Church leadership led no other organized reaction against the growing critique during the 1880s. In 1891, Kirkjublaðið was founded, edited by the president of the Theological Seminary.

This paper did not confront the critique of the official religious model on all fronts: rather, its policy was to avoid polemics and disputes. It did agree with some criticism, e.g. that of the Icelandic clergy in N. America. Its editor supported the idea of a more independent position of the church vis-a-vis the state and even separation if this were the only means of reviving the Church. In 1896 a new church paper, Verði ljós was started by another teacher of the Theological Seminary, Jón Helgason, who took up a more consequential apology against the critique of the official model and its theology.

The church publications of course lamented the influences of Copenhagen on the Icelandic students during their studies at the university, a factor which was even used as an argument for the founding of a University in Iceland (see Kbl II, 13 1892; ibid III, 5 1893; ibid V, 5 1895; ibid VI, 10 1896).

In general, the Icelandic church publications lacked a thorough theological rethinking or review during this period (1880-1900). The Martensenian version of orthodoxy was still the ruling theology but its plausibility structures were in a process of rapid deterioration as will be shown in the following.

6.6 DIFFERENTIATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

6.6.1 The Forces of Democratization

The growing dissatisfaction with the official religious model in Iceland was associated with several other issues of social and political importance during the remainder of the 19th century. These include anti-officialism, democratization and nationalist politics.

Very often during the 1880s, the discussion of religious and church matters became entangled in a discussion of clerical income and means of improving the clergy's economic status. And in many publications this provided an opportunity for discussing the role of the clergy and of the Church in general. The salaries of other officials were frequently discussed. Alping, which at this time exercised financial responsibility and legislative power in internal affairs, agreed upon salary rises to a level comparable to the salaries of officials in Denmark. This meant considerable increases which burdened the National Treasury and was met with the dissatisfaction of the farmers and their political spokesmen. A direct consequence of this was a wave of anti-officialism directed towards the government agencies in Iceland, including governors, sheriffs and the Bishop who was one of the highest salaried officials in the country (see, e.g. Þjóð XXXIII, 30 23/12 1881; ibid XXXIV, 18 9/8 1882; ibid XXXV, 6, 10, 15 1883).

The Bishop was closely related to the Danish administration and as stated above, held several administrative functions. The Danish government was still the highest authority in church matters in Iceland and was, as such, a part of the church leadership.

There appeared occasional proposals for terminating the offices of the regional governors and the office that of the Bishop. The latter was to take place through combining it with the office of the Dean of Kjalarnes or with that of the president of the Theological Seminary. The fact that the Bishop Pétur Pétursson, in office from 1866 to 1889, was conservative in church matters and national politics (a member of the governmental group in Alþingi) intensified the critique directed towards the Church leadership. Some of the most radical patriotic elements were also the harshest critics of the official religious model and the bishop.

The wave of anti-officialism was, however, not expressed as anti-clericalism. The role of the clergy as local leaders and representatives of the farming sector in the Alþingi contributed to this, as did the fact that the salary increases did not apply to the local pastors. Their income basis remained unchanged (see Chapter 3.5) and efforts were made to improve their lot by combining benefices and not by increasing the taxes and fees of the local people.

Thus the anti-establishment attitudes and demands for democratization were directed against the Church leaders and not the clergy. The local people wanted more to say about the election of the clergy and they opposed the authority's decisions to remove the vicarages from their communal territory. The authority of the Church leadership was taken as an manifestation of the hegemony of the establishment. The parish councils were though a step forward in the democratization of the Church as was the abolishment of the obligation of all residents to turn only to the local pastor in all religious matters (see Chapter 4.3.2). But these changes were limited to the local level and were minor in relation to the official model.

Both Alþingi and the Church leadership were slow in meeting demands which in any crucial respect would have altered the position of the Church even if such changes were recommended by the constitution of 1874. The Danish government prevented authorization of legislation for Iceland which would have surpassed the democratization process in Denmark. The election of the clergy became an issue with far reaching consequences as a test for the official model of the State Church in Iceland.

6.6.2 The Evangelical Lutheran Free-Church

The issue of the democratization of the church was raised most forcefully in connection with the establishment of an independent congregation at Reyðarfjörður on the East coast in the beginning of the 1880s. At the death of the elderly pastor of the Hólma Benefice in 1880, the parishioners specifically requested his son, who had assisted the father for several years, to take over the pastoral duties. However, the Church authorities appointed another whose many years of experience made him the better

qualified. The decision caused resentment among the local people and in the Spring of 1881 two-thirds of the parishioners withdrew their membership from the State Church with reference to their constitutional right of freedom of religion. They founded an independent congregation and elected a governing committee which assumed leadership in the absence of a pastor.

The matter of obtaining a pastor solved itself in a rather incidental way for the new congregation. In the Summer of 1883 the congregation signed a contract with its new pastor, Rev. Lárus Halldórsson, a former dean of the State Church who had just prior to this left his office due to unusual circumstances.¹¹

The existence of an independent Lutheran congregation created complicated legal problems due to the integration of church matters and the civil order. Initially, the congregation's status as an independent religious community was not accepted by the authorities. There were no Icelandic laws pertaining to such a situation and in Alþing, and there was strong opposition to such legislation despite the apparent support of the constitution.

The State Church pastor was legally correct in using police force to collect the traditional fees and taxes since there were no laws exempting those who claimed to be outside the institution. He was also supposed to carry out his duties as supervisor of the education of the children of the Free-congregation and to maintain the usual ministerial records and census. In contrast, the legal status of the pastor of the Free-congregation was ambiguous to the point of absurdity. The local pastor inquired of the Bishop whether the pastor of the independent congregation was allowed to use the parish church and cemetery in the service of the congregation. The Church authorities forbade all such use of the parish sanctuary and, in a governmental letter, all religious ceremonies carried out by the pastor of the free-congregation were declared unofficial and void of civil relevance (Stjt 1884 B 181f).

One of the leaders in the establishment of the independent congregation was the editor Jón Ólafsson, mentioned above. He was a member of the Hólma parish and renounced his membership together with the others. His leadership was no doubt connected with his previous position as representative of the council of Holma parish at the Deanary meeting in 1880 (Skuld IV, 123 23/9 1880), and he was acquainted with the concept of independent congregations from his stay in N. America.

As the editor of Þjóðlífur in Reykjavík, Jón Ólafsson became a spokesman of the independent congregation and the "Free-Church Movement" in the beginning of the 1880s. He defended the congregation and encouraged "all true believers of Christian progress and liberty" to support, financially, the "First Free Church Congregation in Iceland". The paper announced that it would accept contributions on behalf of the congregation. Articles sympathetic of the venture also appeared in other papers (see Þjóð XXXV, 36 29/9 1883; ibid XXXVI, 22 7/5 1884; ibid XXXVI, 32 18/8 1884; ibid XXXVI, 26 5/6 1884; Fróði VI, 165 27/7 1885; Fjk 20/8, 30/12 1884; Fróði V, 131-132 1884; Isaf XII, 14 1885).

The Icelandic students in Copenhagen also expressed approval of these

new trends in church life. When Larus Halldorsson visited Copenhagen in 1884 in order to present the cause of his congregation to the Danish authorities, the students organized a meeting in his honour. For the occasion, Þorsteinn Erlingsson wrote a poem praising the efforts of the independent congregation of Reyðarfjörður and their struggle against the establishment (Þjóð XXXVI, 36 22/9 1884; see also B. Benediktsson 1958: 211). This is an indication of points of convergence of the most radical and otherwise uncompromising opponents of the official religious model.

6.6.3 Legislative Differentiation

The activities of the independent congregation at Reyðarfjörður aroused considerable attention and interest as well as aggressive reactions not unlike those caused by earlier "dissenters". In Alþing and in the press the innovators were sometimes referred to as "church revolutionaries", and one member of Alþing maintained that the legalization of their activities would encourage irreligion (Alþt 1883 B: 98 for instance).

The issue was brought before Alþing by Jón Ólafsson (a member since 1881) in its 1881, 1883 and 1885 sessions. The bills considered both the right of the parishioners to elect a pastor and the legal status of those who left the State Church. Even though the Bishop and some clergymen opposed the idea of extending the rights of the parishioners, the issue received majority support in Alþing (Alþt 1881 II: 612 ff; ibid: 645 f; Alþt 1883A: 40 f; for discussions in the press see, e.g. Fróði II, 35 21/2 1881; ibid VI, 165 27/7 1885; Nordanf XXII, 37-38 20/8 1883; ibid XXIII, 27-28 7/8 1884).

In 1881 and 1883 Alþing passed the bill granting parishioners the right to choose their own pastor but the Danish government rejected in both cases. The Danish rejection, however, only aroused more political interest for the matter in Iceland (see, e.g. Fjk 18/3 1887 and Nlj II, 15 10/10 1887). Rev. Lárus Halldórsson, who already as a young man was known for his radical patriotism, was elected to Alþing in 1886. In 1885, the National Convention at Þingvellir, which normally did not make resolutions in religious and church matters, took up the issues and recommended Alþing to continue its efforts in reference to the rights of the parishioners and the legal status of those outside the State Church (Suðri III, 18 30/6 1885).

The majority of Alþing was reluctant in showing support for the civil rights of those outside the State Church. New legislation was not agreed upon until 1885, by which time the clergy members of Alþing realized the inevitability of such laws and they aided in formulating these laws in an effort to render the final version the least harmful to the status of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a national church.

The laws were composed of three sections. The first granted civil marriage in cases where one or both individuals were outside the State Church. The second dealt with the civil status of the enactment of the services of the independent congregation. Once the pastor of an independent congregation had received government approval his religious services were to have the same official and civil status as those of the State Church

pastors. The third section had to do with the payment of taxes and exempted only the members of governmentally approved congregations from some, but not all taxes and fees to the State Church (Alpt 1885 C: 363f).

These laws, which were authorized by the Danish authorities the following year, meant radical change in the formal position of the Church and its relation to the state. The global claims of the official religious model in areas of theology and social order were de facto rejected. Its dogma was no longer granted an absolute status in the country; the state could approve other religious bodies. In theory, this legislature meant the desacralization of some of the most vital mechanisms of the social order.

This differentiation took place while the population yet remained religiously homogeneous. Neither the independent congregation of Reyðarfjörður nor any of the Lutheran free-congregations in Iceland have ever diverged from the State Church on theological issues or over questions of ritual and ceremony. All of them (there were about 15, most of which lasted only a few years), except for the Lutheran Free congregation of Reykjavík founded in 1899 (see Chapter 7.5), were motivated by local grievances concerning the appointment of a pastor or, as was more usual later on, grievances arising due to the consolidation of the benefice.

The census of 1880 shows only four non-members of the State Church in Iceland (Stjt 1884C: 61-63). The 1890 census registered 27 persons outside the State Church (not including the free congregations), and most likely the majority of these were foreigners (Stjt 1893C: 64). Thus, the situation was far from being religiously pluralistic, but the legal differentiation measures of 1886 opened the way for steps in this direction without the country first having to experience religious conflict which might have become superimposed on socio-political cleavages.

The opponents of the official religious model did not manage to unite themselves and mobilize political support for an anti-church programme. The radical political activists among the Icelandic intellectuals in Copenhagen who had adopted the anti-church view of G. Brandes, for instance, did not manage to unite with the National Front of S. Þingeyjar district. The latter never mobilized support outside their own district even though such plans existed, and in the early 1890s, this group was politically insignificant even though some of the members were still politically active (G. Karlsson 1977: 193-202, 237f).

The older generation of political leaders was against radical change in Church matters and the new generation soon realized the political influence of the clergy and the necessity of cooperation with them in the crucial national issues (see Björn Jónsson Ísaf XXVII, 47 28/7 1900; XXXII, 54 16/8 1905; Skúli Thoroddsen/Sigurður Stefánsson Þjóðv XIV, 8-9 1900; Valþýr Guðmundsson Eimreiðin III, 1 1907: 11f; *ibid* XVI, 3 1910: 227; see also Þ. Thorarensen 1969: 190).

In several respects the official religious model remained in effect throughout the 19th century and several unsuccessful attempts were made in the following years to broaden the process of differentiation initiated by the legislation of 1886. Bills were submitted requesting complete exemption from payment of all forms of taxes for all outside the State Church. But

the proposals were resisted by Alþing mainly due to a fear that people might leave the national church for financial reasons. It was not until 1903 that members of other religious bodies were exempted from all taxes and fees to the State Church (M. Jónsson 1952:34).

Until 1915, those outside the State Church and not belonging to an approved religious assembly or congregation were obliged to pay all taxes to the Church and clergy. Since then, however, new laws have relieved non-members of this duty, providing that they contribute an equal amount to education.

Proposals to extend the right of civil marriage even to members of the State Church were introduced and discussed on several occasions in Alþing. These proposals were opposed by the Bishop and most of the clergy alike, who, in reference to Bishop Martensen, maintained that such measures were the result of "the secular spirit of our age" which was both "irreligious and corrupt" (Alþt 1885A: 82-85). Nevertheless, in 1895 the Alþing passed a bill granting this right which the government turned down however, because it was considered to be opposed to national traditions and the sense of sacredness of the institution (Stjt 1897 B: 13f; see also M. Jónsson 1952:43-44). In 1921, civil marriage was made an option even for members of the State Church. Those marriages accounted for 8 percent of all marriages from 1926 to 1930 and 17 percent from 1931 to 1935 (Population and Vital Statistics 1952: 21).

6.6.4 The National Church and Icelandic State-Building

As indicated in the discussion above, the issue of differentiation was coupled with the matter of proper relations between state and church. During the first half of the 1880s the issue was mainly associated with the debate on the independent congregations, but towards the end of the 1880s the latter received less attention in the press whereas the separation issue increased in intensity and became a significant political issue.

At the political meetings in which the issue of state-church relations was discussed and resolutions passed between 1890 and 1910, the majority favoured the separation of the two entities.¹² The resolutions on the issue were generally coloured by the Liberalist and Leftist ideas described above and the argument that separation was necessary in order to improve and vitalize the Church was often associated with this. Among the clergy, different views could be found. The editor of Kirkjublaðið favoured a similar view (K bl IV, 8 1894; ibid V, 4 1895; ibid V, 5 1895), whereas the editor of Verði ljós doubted that this would solve the problems of the Church.¹³

The issue of church and state separation proved to be complicated by many conflicting ideas as to its solution. The land-holdings of the Church were still considerable: 15 percent of the total (see Chapter 2.2), but there was no consensus as to what would become of the land and other property should separation occur. Some felt it should all go to the state, others suggested that it be taken over by an evangelical free church and a third faction preferred dividing it among all the religious groups in the

country. Neither was there consensus as to what type of free church should be established; whether it should be nation-wide or composed of independent congregations.¹⁴

The Deanary meetings which occasionally took up the issue of separation generally opposed it.

After the turn of the century, the separation issue appealed less to the clergy, but a majority seemed to favour the idea of a separate church assembly with legislative power in church matters. This idea was supported in resolutions passed by the Clergy Meetings on various occasions, but the opinion of the majority of Alþingi saw an independent church assembly as incompatible with the constitutional and financial support of the state.

In 1904 a special parliamentary committee was assigned by the new Icelandic minister to investigate the matter and suggest proposals for improvement. The initiative to this endeavour was taken at the Clergy Meeting of 1903 which appealed to Alþingi to thoroughly reexamine church legislation. The Ministers instructions to the committee included proposals on the following issues (Tillögur um kirkjumál 1906: 3): 1) a more appropriate organization of church matters to allow the church to act more according to its own principles and purpose; 2) whether and how the relation between state and church should be maintained in the future; 3) a more practical territorial division of the benefices; 4) Improvements in the income of the clergy and in methods of collection thereof.

The committee submitted separate bills on these matters most of which were referred by the government to Alþingi and approved. The bill on church assembly and the bill on church and state separation, the latter was composed by a minority within the committee, were not submitted.

The transference of the Administrative Centre, the Bureau for Icelandic Affairs and the Ministry from Copenhagen to Reykjavík in 1904 included a reorganization of the official administration on the higher level. For the office of the Bishop this meant fewer non-church administrative functions. As mentioned earlier, the governor of the South and East in conjunction with the Bishop, formed the "stifts" authority which supervised domestic education on both primary and higher levels, in addition to other administrative responsibilities. In 1904 the offices of the governors were discontinued with the new Icelandic ministerium assuming most of their responsibilities. The supervision of education was separated from the office of the Bishop and transferred to a special department within the Ministerium for Education and Justice. In 1906, a special office of the Director of Education was established (see Chapter 4.2.4).

Formerly, the Bishop had also supervised the National Library and the Archeological Museum and had been a member of the governing committees of several foundations and institutions. In 1904, the Office of the Bishop was relieved of these duties and also the duties in connection with local price setting (A. K. Jónsson 1969: 62-64).

Thus, the role of the Bishop was more confined to the supervision of Church matters and the clergy, but until 1916, he collected the annual records of the clergy on births, marriages and deaths and systematized

them. This task was then transferred to the newly established Statistical Bureau of Iceland.

It would appear that there was general agreement from all sides on the separation of the functions of the Bishop's office, but for varying reasons. To some, this was a natural element in the process towards separation of church and state, whereas others saw it as the proper means of increasing church autonomy. In his official letter in commenting these changes, the Bishop agreed with his disengagement and with the policy of differentiation of the new legislation (A letter from the Stifts Authorities 26/7 1904, Stjórnarráð Isl I, Dagb 1, nr. 169).

The Icelandic Church gradually became more independent of Denmark. We have already discussed the impact of the 1874 constitution in this respect. In 1904 the Icelandic Minister in Reykjavik became the highest authority in Church matters and in 1909, Alþing decided that two ordaining Bishops should be elected by the clergy, one in each of the old dioceses (of Hólar and Skálholt). The reason for this was to make it possible for the Bishop of Iceland to be ordained in Iceland instead of having to travel to Denmark. The ordaining bishops had no other functions, their office being that of ordinary parish pastors. This was, therefore, a political act intended to symbolize the independence of the Icelandic National Church.

The general direction of development was towards increased autonomy for the Church even though it happened at a slow rate. Until 1919 the Bishop and Governor or Chief Justice lead the Synodal Court and the Clergy Meetings. Subsequent to this time the Bishop was no longer a member of the court and the secular judges were in the majority. The Bishop was sole head of the Clergy Meeting which had no legislative or judicial authority but acted simply as an advisory body (B. Þórólfsson 1956: 56-59). The formal authority of the Bishop was thus successively reduced but with the greater autonomy and authority of the church in inner matters, the Bishop's role acquired new strength. He became the head of the Church Council in 1931 and the Church Assembly in 1957. According to the new laws of 1921, the clergy were granted the right to elect the bishops, a task formerly performed by the government.

Despite the common attitude of the politically active around the turn of the century that the church and state should be separated, the political parties did not usually make this issue part of their platform. These were not political parties in the modern sense with comprehensive ideological programmes; rather, emphasis was placed on the dominant political issues of the time. The National Front of the district of S-Þingeyjar was, however as stated above, an exception in this sense.

The Progressive Party (not to be confused with the one founded in 1916), by and large synonymous with the group referred to previously as the Valtýrist (Chapter 5.4), included in their address to the nation in 1902 its desire to work for "...more practical arrangements concerning church matters" (Þjóð LIV, 34 22/8 1902; Isaf XXIX, 53 20/8 1902). The older Independence Party included the separation issue in its 1913 election campaign. The party favoured an investigation of the relations between the

Church and state in order effectuate the separation in the most convenient means possible (Ingól XI, 40 8/10 1913).

Although the policy of the leaders of the National Guards was quite clear from several articles written in their publication, they favoured total separation and wanted religious education taken out of the public schools, but they did not make this a key issue of the day (see, e.g. Ingól V, 38 22/9 1907; *ibid* IV, 21 6/5 1906; Fjk XXIV, 12 23/3 1907; *ibid* XXIV, 19 10/5 1907). They were most fundamentalist on the constitutional issue and national politics was their prime concern for which they successfully attempted to mobilize popular support.

The Nationalistic Youth Movement (UMFI), whose central organization was founded in Reykjavik in 1907 did not support the separation issue. In general, it seems to have supported a "Liberal National Church", an institution compatible with Icelandic culture and the maintenance of national values (Skinfaxi VII, 10 1916; *ibid* VIII, 2 1917). This standpoint was later adopted as the policy of the Progressive Party founded in 1916, whose younger leaders grew up within the Nationalistic Youth Movement (P. M. Jónsson 1960: 52f). This party received its main support from the rural people and the Cooperative Movement (see Chapter 4.2.4).

It was not until 1916 that the Labour Union was founded in Reykjavik together with the Social Democratic Party. This was the beginning of the Socialistic Labour Movement in Iceland. The first Socialistic Society had been formed in Akureyri in 1915, and included the same platform articles on religion as did the Danish Socialists: "...that religion was a private matter and of no concern to the State as long as it did not contradict the social order" (E. Olgeirsson 1966). The same formulation was included in the first platform of the Icelandic Social Democratic Party (Alþýðuflokkurinn 1917:9; see also Ö. R. Einarsson 1979: 309).

Judging from the available sources, it appears that religion and church matters were seldom discussed officially within the Labour Union and Social Democratic Party. Reports from some of the first congresses and meetings are missing, but from those available, there is no indication of resolutions agreed upon in these matters (Þingliðindi Alþýðuf. og A. S. I. 1928, 1930. 1934). The publications of the Socialists and their Youth Societies indicate no aggressive policy directed towards the Church or the Christian religion. Critical references to the Church or to religion were normally directed towards concrete incidents and persons, and not towards the two as such. The opinion was often expressed that Jesus was a revolutionary and a socialist but that the Church was no longer faithful to his teachings (see, e.g. Kyndill I, 1 1928).

The major reason for the lack of general confrontation between the church and Socialism in the 1920s was the fact that the Church, due to the differentiation process, found itself in the periphery of society. In the socialistic critique of the basic institutions of the capitalistic society, it was not considered necessary to mention the church specifically. In reviewing the religious situation, the Bishop found the general attitude of the workers to be positive towards the Church, noting their willingness to participate in its activities (J. Helgason 1930: 24).

The political debate over the separation of the church and state subsided at the end of the second decade. Since then the issue of separation has seldom been discussed in Alþing, and interest for it diminished among the politically active. The process of differentiation had disengaged the administrative functions of the state and church but in such a way that the former retained complete control over the latter. Simultaneously, the democratization process contributed to the legitimation of the Church in the new social setting. At the higher level of Church administration, this democratization process was slower but, in due course, increased the autonomy of the Church in its own affairs, i.e. the specialization of the Church in "its own sector". In actuality, this was the continuation of the process of differentiation of church and state, a process never completed. The Church, depending on the majority culture, found itself in a process of institutionalization of religious tolerance and pluralism.

In the 1920s, the position of the Church seems to have been consolidated. The new Icelandic state (in 1918) seemed to find itself quite comfortable in its position of control over the Church. National and historical arguments were certainly of importance in the development of reconciliation between the Church and politicians. The Church now found itself in the periphery of the political and economical life, but culturally, in the minds of most people, its historical framework was associated with national identity and traditions. It constituted a consolidating factor between the past and the present, a factor which was of more importance for a nation systematizing its own cultural identity as an independent state and, at the same time, going through rapid socio-economic changes.

6.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The process of political nation building in Iceland in the period 1830-1850 was associated with the Romantic theology of the New Orthodoxy in opposition to the Rationalistic Establishment and the ideology of the Enlightened Absolutism. The New Orthodoxy, therefore, had certain emancipatory effects vis-a-vis the hegemony of the allembracing claims of the Establishment of the Absolute Ruler. But the development of relations with Denmark in 1850 completely changed the framework of the political nation-building process in this respect. The King had renounced his absolute power and a relatively liberal government was established in Denmark along with a parliament. Iceland did not gain political rights in the wake of the termination of Absolutism, instead, it was to be submitted to the Danish government. The period 1851-1874 is marked by a retardation in the national liberal centre building process in Iceland. Political mobilization took place within the framework of an ultra-conservative religious model of the State Church. The plausibility structures of this religious model were already faltering in Denmark but in Iceland they became integrated with the rising political significance of the Crown since the National Convention of 1851 failed to achieve the national aims of the

Icelandic politicians. The Absolute power in Icelandic affairs became the cornerstone of the nationalist strategy against the Danish government until the establishment of an independent political and administrative centre in the beginning of the 20th century.

The Church of Iceland played a dual role in the centre building process. Its leadership including the Icelandic Bishops was integrated with the Danish authorities and represented governments interests in the constitutional issue in Alþing. On the other hand, the clergy served on the local level as social and political leaders and represented national interests in Alþing. As long as a certain balance was maintained, which was clearly the strategy of the political elite, these two political extremes could unite under the auspices of one and the same church ideology. The lack of any form of church autonomy was crucial in maintaining this balance which was based on preventing theological issues to gain political significance.

The plausibility structure of the hegemony of the religious model is also to be sought in the structural characteristics of the Icelandic society. The socio-economic structure was undeveloped and relatively undifferentiated until the end of the 19th century at which time a shift is observed towards a more differentiated and capitalistic economy. The farmers formed the basis of the political and social mobilization. The national elite with its centre in Copenhagen had to rely on leaders within the farming sector for this mobilization. For several reasons the clergy was a crucial mediating link in both the political and social mobilization. The first half of the period under study showed that the process of political nation-building in Iceland was a force which maintained the relatively homogenous and undifferentiated cultural pattern in Iceland. The process was associated with the addition of further responsibility for the clergy. Therefore, it was in the interests of the political nation building process to hold intact the legitimation of this undifferentiated structure and religious homogeneity.

The transition from vertical structures of social solidarity (Absolutism) to the more horizontal (Democracy) were less associated with religious and theological conceptions in Iceland than was the case in Denmark. This was partly an effect of the fact that in defining national identity and values the national elite turned to the literary heritage and language and not to religion per se.

A significant blow to the conservative ideological basis of the political nation-building process was the differentiation which took place within the intellectual stratum when the Icelandic intelligentsia in Copenhagen became alienated from the official religious model. This shift denoted a desacralization of the intellectual milieu which affected the cultural and political life in Iceland.

This was paralleled by opposition against the official religious model in Iceland which became more and more the subject of criticism from different directions including religious Liberalism and anti-church Realism, variously mixed with anti-officialism and the democratic spirit of the age. The political opposition to the Danish authorities was more or less a part

of this general opposition. The growing criticism centered around the Church leadership. The participation of the clergy in the mobilization, nevertheless, hindered a politically significant anti-clericalism.

The opposition to the State Church and the official religious model in Iceland was not theologically motivated; rather, it was directed against the hegemony of the leadership and the authoritarian government of the Church. An indication of this was the role of the independent congregation in the beginning of the 1880s and the "Free-Church" ideology. The legal problems associated with the existence of the independent congregation brought to the foreground the issue of religious freedom and the civil rights of those who found themselves outside the official Church of Iceland. As a result, new legislation appeared in 1886 which ended the monopoly status of the Evangelical Lutheran Church though it remained a state-supported national church.

Following this one observes a slow process of democratization of the Church, and in the beginning of the 20th century the process of differentiation of church and state began, particularly in relation to the internalization of the administration and the political centre being established in Reykjavik in 1904.

The period from 1880 to 1918 was characterized by an intensified political struggle for national rights. This was synchronized with an intensified struggle for the establishment of a political centre in Iceland, and the critique of the official religious model, particularly the issue of separation of church and state. But when the political goal of the fundamental nationalists was achieved in 1918 through the declaration of Iceland as a sovereign state, the issue of separation became abruptly devoid of political significance.

The Church, whose top leadership was formerly integrated with the centre of the Danish administration, was accepted by the new nation-state as the historical guardian of national values. The processes of democratization and differentiation reformed the Church into a suitable frame for the new state.

Notes to Chapter 6

1. P. Pétursson was also the author of many religious books which became popular among the common people and were read during the devotionals in rural homes. In his church policy and theology he represented a "mild version" of Lutheran Orthodoxy. As for the Church, he accentuated the authority of the King in the matter as against the attempts towards the democratization of the institution. (J. Jónsson 1955: 76f). These sentiments are recorded time and again in the Alþing proceedings.
2. Contrary to his fellow students and colleagues of the 1830s who found themselves theologically moving away from rationalistic standpoints and towards neo-orthodox ideas, M. Eriksen became more and more a rationalist, influenced by Historical Criticism and the Tübingen

School. His book on the Gospel of John, in which he refuted some of the basic dogmas of the Church, aroused hateful reactions in Iceland. He was accused of being an atheist and a heretic. In certain articles in Icelandic papers it was even suggested that the Danish government should imprison him and burn his books (E. Albertsson 1938: 350ff; A. Sigurjónsson 1957: 278f; J. Helgason 1922: 190).

3. The presentation of the Mormons is based on the following sources: M. Jónsson 1958: 340ff; S. M. Johnsen 1960-65; S. M. Johnsen 1946: 121-128; J. Pálsson 1934: 73-83; B. Jonsson 1879: 127ff; Fróði II, 52 8/9 1881; Þjóðl XXVIII, 7 1876; ibid XXXIII, 2,3,7,23 1881; ibid XXXIV, 25 1882; V. Þ.Gíslason 1946: 142f, Stjt 1875 B: 100).
4. Sveinsson maintained that it was unlawful for an Icelander to cast off his Evangelical Lutheran faith, and, furthermore, illegal for anyone to urge an Icelander to do so. Icelandic converts would automatically loose their right of inheritance and even the right to remain in the country. They were to leave immediately, with police force if necessary, never to return (Islendingur I 1, 3, 6, 8, 1860; see also A. Sigurjónsson 1857: 250f).
5. Norðanf VI, 9-10 1/3 1867; Ibid XI, 49-50 11/12 1872; ibid XIII, 45-46 14/9 1874; ibid XIII, 47-48 22/9 1874; Isaf III, 8 21/4 1876. These references are most likely not complete since the list is based on a concise reading of the main papers. The absence of discussion of this issue and related matters in Þjóðblfur, the political publications of the fundamental nationalists under the editorship of Jon Guðmundsson, is noteworthy in this context. When Rev. Matthias Jockumsson took over the paper in 1875, articles indicative of a more liberalistic approach to religious and church matters appeared, as will be seen later in this chapter.
6. A closer look at the natural science teachers at the Latin school in Reykjavik until the 1880s shows that the majority were either theologians or poets of the Romantic era, and hence, were not likely to criticize religion in the name of science. Even though Darwin's theory of origins of the species was known in Iceland, it was not associated with atheism or anti-clerical attitudes during this period (I. Sigurðsson 1981: 63ff).
7. See: Þjóðl XXVIII, 10 22/3 1876. M. Jockumsson is most likely also the author of an article on this subject in Nlj II, 15 10/10 1887. In 1880 he returned to his office as clergyman, but was reprimanded by the bishop in 1891 for articles in which he had refuted some of the orthodox dogmas. He was well known as a poet and wrote many hymns for the Church of Iceland.
8. Verðandi, supposedly an annual publication but appearing only in 1882

and the monthly Heimdallur appearing only in 1884. These ideas clearly influenced other papers, particularly those edited by former students of the University of Copenhagen (Suðri and Þjóðviljinn) as well as others (i.e. Fjallkonan and Norðurljósið).

9. Erlingsson was inspired by socialism and returned to Iceland in 1896 to become editor of the newspapers Bjarki (1896-1900) and Arnfríðingur (1901-1903).
- 10 Engaged in this debate were friends and supporters of Erlingsson, notably the physician Guðmundur Hannesson. From the Church view, a young theologian, Haraldur Nielsson, wrote against the world-view of the poems. These two men, Hannesson and Nielsson, were former acquaintances from their years at the University of Copenhagen. The general themes of this dispute dealt with: whether or not atheists could be of higher moral character than believers; the extent to which the moral order of society was based on religion; and whether or not belief systems other than the Christian taught the true love for ones neighbour. Guðmundur Hannesson, a self-proclaimed atheist (vantrúar-maður), claimed that he shared this distinction with many of his countrymen (Island II, 34 25/8 1898; *ibid* II, 35 14/9 1898). The two former acquaintances reminded each other of their previous discussions on the truth of Christianity while students in Copenhagen and that they had agreed that the Christian religion would stand or fall on the issue of the resurrection of Christ. Hannesson had promised to brush aside all doubt and scepticism if he could be convinced of the resurrection (Isaf XXV, 35 4/6 1898; see also Isafold XXV, 34 1/6 1898; *ibid* XXV, 36, 62, 63, 64 Jun-Oct. 1898; Island II, 34, 43, Aug-Nov. 1898; Vlj 1892, 2). This debate revealed one of the basic issues of the intellectual community in Iceland since the 1880s, namely the religious nature of the social and moral order. It is both symbolic and characteristic of the development of the intellectual milieu of Iceland that these two men, generally recognized as among the most promising of intellectuals (both became professors at the University of Iceland), joined together in the Psychic Research Unit ten years later (see Chapter 7.9.1).
11. For some time Rev. L. Halldórsson had been in conflict with some of his parishioners and the Church authorities over Church ritual and ceremony. He opposed the use of mass vestment and alter service. According to him these were remnants of Catholicism and "Danish superstition" (Norðanf XXII, 29-34 26/6 1883; *ibid* XXIV, 23-24 26/3 1885; Suðri I, 10 19/5 1883; Fróði IV, 120 13/12 1883). In the beginning his activities were unrelated to the events in Hólmá parish, but his determination to live out his conviction despite an possible dismissal from office in the State Church was most likely influenced by the prospects of becoming the pastor of the independent congregation in a nearby community (Fróði 160 28/5 1885; K.

12. This conclusion is based on a reading of the major papers for the period including: Isafold, Þjóðólfur, Fjallkonan, Reykjavík, Lögrétta, and Ingólfur.
13. At the Clergy Meeting of 1897 the matter of separation was lively discussed and had several supporters among the clergy (see VIj 1897,8). Some of them viewed separation as the only means of improving the church. Others pointed out that separation was perhaps the solution to the economic problems of the clergy since the free-congregations would take better care of their pastors than did the State Church.
14. The major lines of the debate can be extracted in the following sources: Rvík XIII, 13-19 1912; *ibid* VIII, 52-53 1907; Þjóð L, 19-24 1898; Kbl VI, 9 1896; Fríkirkjan I-IV 1899-1904; Eimreiðin XIII, 2 1907; *ibid* XX, 3 1914; Fjk XIV, 4 28/1 1897; *ibid* XI, 35 28/8 1894; *ibid* XIII, 28 8/7 1896; *ibid* XIII, 45-46 1896; Réttur I, 2 1916; Verkamannablað I, 26 20/12 1913; Bjarmi I, 14 1907.

7. The Reactive Pattern

7.1 INTRODUCTION

It has previously been pointed out that no new religious movement had gained a stronghold in Iceland during the 19th century and that the orthodox Lutheran doctrine was the dominant theology of the Icelandic Church. Despite the growing criticism of Church leadership, the official religious model maintained itself practically throughout the century. This was true in spite of the structural changes taking place since the 1880s which, in due time, radically changed the role of the church in society and especially the position of the clergy. Religious tolerance was being institutionalized. The official religious model could no longer rely on the institutions of power to sustain its religious and theological monopoly.

And so by the 1890s, there existed a new situation in Iceland, more congenial for the various new religious movements and orientations which, in the latter half of the 19th century, were becoming active in the neighbouring countries.

In this chapter we will account for the new religious movements and orientations which entered the Icelandic scene around the turn of the century, and we will analyse their origin and development in the Icelandic context in reference to social and political factors.

The new trends and movements were introduced into a milieu of growing dissatisfaction with, and alienation towards, the traditional religious forms and institutions. Whereas the official theological system and religious values had previously been the most significant factor constituting the moral order of the farming society, there appeared in the 1890s, a new social order which lacked the earlier relations of supervision and social control to the official religious institutions and customs. These factors constitute the sociological context within which the new religious movements will be analysed. In other words, we will investigate if, and to what extent, these trends may be seen as a reaction to a situation of disengagement and desacralization (or laicization in Dobbelaere's terms).

7.2 THE SALVATION ARMY

In 1895 a Danish officer of the Salvation Army arrived in Reykjavík accompanied by an Icelander who had lived abroad several years and had become a member of the Army. In the beginning their missionary methods and style were met with suspicion and their meetings often erupted into

upheavals. The Icelandic audience had had little experience with lay missionary activities and forms of religious teachings, nor was it familiar with worship outside the framework of the official Church or the private sphere of the home. With few exceptions, the press ridiculed the Army and its "exaggerated and fanatical" religious agitation.

Those who joined the Army were exclusively working-class people (including servants and former rural labourers) and some semi-skilled labourers. People found it very strange to see them raise themselves aloft in religious and moral matters. The social efforts of the Army, however, soon received more respect especially by the authorities who often turned to them for help with needs which they themselves were unable to provide for. This was especially the case in Reykjavík where the Army operated accommodation facilities for poorer travellers.

During its first decade in Iceland, the Salvation Army had established small stations in the larger townships and fishing settlements, but it never became a large organization nor was it influential in the religious life of Iceland. In 1920, amidst good years for the Army, it had 122 soldiers and novices and 13 officers (Frasögn 1920:62).

The officers were usually Danish and remained in Iceland only a few years which created language problems among the leadership. Furthermore, as described earlier, the patriotic revival was intensified during these years and reached all layers of the population. Nothing with Danish associations was likely to receive popular support in Iceland on account of the anti-Danish attitudes. In 1927, an Icelander became head of the Icelandic department of the Army for the first time.²

7.3 THE CATHOLIC CONGREGATION

The fate of the Catholic mission that started in the middle of the 19th century has been described above. The Catholic Church still owned the farm land of Landakot which, because of the extension of the town, was now within the territory of Reykjavík. In 1895, the same year that the Salvation Army arrived, two Danish priests were sent to Iceland by the Catholic Bishop in Denmark. They took over the facilities of Landakot which became the centre of the Icelandic mission. The following year, nuns of the Danish Order of St. Joseph of Chambery arrived in Reykjavík and proved resourceful for the establishing of the mission station. In 1897, a wooden church was erected and a school started for the children in Reykjavík. In 1902, the St. Joseph sisters founded a hospital in Reykjavík which remained the largest in Iceland for many years.

The Catholic school became popular among the upper classes in Reykjavík. In 1908 there were between 70 and 80 pupils, only a small minority of whom were Catholic (Finnbogason 1905:57; Rvík IX, 36 18/8 1908). Some of the nuns and priests were highly trained academics and the school was superior in quality, especially in the teaching of foreign languages. The teaching of Christian dogmatics was not included in the curriculum, but it was generally assumed that, together with the hospital, the school was run with

missionary intentions as a long term plan of the Catholics. At the onset, negative reactions were observed in the press. Educators and others warned against the influence of the Catholics on public education in Iceland. The school was criticized for being Danish rather than Icelandic and several of the critics in fact were more concerned about it being Danish and less with its catholicism. It was thought to be detrimental to the development of the national consciousness of the children and a sign of resignation on the part of the Icelanders to send their children to the Catholic school. The attitude of some towards the hospital was comparable. It was maintained that, should the Catholic hospital be accepted, the building of modern Icelandic facilities would be delayed.³

Initially the Catholic congregation showed only modest increases in membership and the majority of the members were foreigners, i.e. the priests and nuns themselves. The census of Reykjavik in 1910 indicated 38 Catholics, 23 of whom were foreign born. The 1920 census showed that of 65 Catholics, 43 were foreign born. The official statistics show 191 Catholics in Iceland in 1930. Of these 143 lived in Reykjavik. The 1930 census of Reykjavik indicates 25 individuals (excepting the priests and nuns) with occupational title. Of these, 18 were working class, semi-skilled and craftsmen. Six had various middle class occupations and one was a merchant (Manntal 1930:161; Bæjarmanntal 1910, 1920 and 1930).

In 1903 the responsibility for the station was turned over to the international order of the Montfort Fathers whose own priests, mainly of Dutch and German origins, replaced the Danish. This was done at the request of the Catholic Bishop in Denmark who was most likely aware of the above mentioned difficulties involved with Danish priests serving in Iceland.

After 1924, a mission post was operated in Hafnarfjörður. Later, a school and a small hospital became situated there. Small stations were operated from time to time in two other townships. This extension of the activities was associated with certain acceptance of the Catholic mission in general, not only in Iceland but in other Nordic countries as well, since the beginning of the 1920s. But in Iceland, this advancement was more spectacular and seems to have been related to the political situation. In 1923 the cardinal van Rossum, a prefect of the Vatican "Congregatio de Propaganda Fide" visited Iceland and made the territory a separate "Apostolic Prefecture" which made the Catholic Church in Iceland independent of Denmark. In 1929 the same cardinal arrived again, this time to designate the head of the station as Bishop of the Catholic Church in Iceland (Apostolic Vicariate). At the same time a new sanctuary was consecrated, a beautiful church of concrete, the largest Catholic Church in the Nordic countries at the time.

As it was in the interests of the new Icelandic state to become recognized internationally, the distinguished guests, the representatives of the Vatican, were welcomed by the government of Iceland. They received invitations from the Prime Minister both in 1924 and 1929, and the cardinal was given the highest honour of the Icelandic state. The cardinal himself was astonished by the reception he received in Iceland which was quite unlike that received in other Nordic countries, and took with him gifts and

special greetings to the Icelanders from the Pope. All this was observed by the international press especially in Catholic countries and was considered a good introduction for Iceland (S.Guðmundsdóttir 1979: 8f; Mbl XVI, 134 14/6 1929).

In the 1920s, some well-known writers converted to Catholicism and in 1924, an Icelander became the first Icelandic Catholic priest since the Reformation. This, together with the seemingly deteriorating status of the Lutheran National Church among the people, sparked optimism among some of the Catholic leaders who hoped that Iceland would be more or less converted to Catholicism within 20 or 30 years. Plans were made for the resurrection of the Catholic institutions in Iceland. However, due to several difficulties mostly associated to World War II, few of these plans were realized.⁴

7.4 PLYMOUTH BRETHREN AND THE PENTECOSTALISTS

At the end of the 1890s, certain Christian sects were introduced into Iceland. An Adventist missionary settled in Reykjavík in 1897 and was followed shortly after by other foreign missionaries. Around 1920, the Pentecostal Movement reached Iceland.⁵ In the beginning these sects had very little success and there was no national revival related to their activities.

In Ísafjörður, a British missionary founded a small Baptist congregation which lasted but a few years. In Akureyri, the Plymouth Brethren continued their evangelical activities for several decades. In the very beginning of the century, a small mission house was built there and in 1905 a young British preacher arrived and operated a mission station more or less continuously until his departure as an old man 50 years later.

Over the years several people came in contact with the Plymouth Brethren mission through the evangelical meetings held in Akureyri. A small group of people formed a congregation which in 1926 applied for and received official status as a religious community with the missionary as their priest. According to their own protocols, the preacher had baptized 147 persons by 1935 (Þorlúglósið XVIII, 7-10 1935).⁶

The importance of the Plymouth Brethren mission lay not so much in the size of their congregation but in that several people who later came to work for other religious groups (the Lutheran Mission Societies and the Pentecostals) had first been in contact with the activities in Akureyri.

In the first half of the 1920s several people belonging to the Pentecostal Movement came to Iceland with the intention of supporting their mission. Of these, three were Icelanders who had come into contact with the movement in America or Sweden and the others were Swedish missionaries. The Icelandic Pentecostal Movement was originally led by Swedish missionaries who were supported financially by the Swedish movement. They had no success in Reykjavík but achieved better results in Vestmannaeyjar. A small congregation founded there in 1926 was composed of only 21 members, in the beginning mainly women. A mission house was built with help from Sweden.⁷

The members of the Plymouth Brethern congregation in Akureyri came for the most part from families of fishermen, workers, semi-skilled labourers and one or two primary school teachers. About two-thirds of the members were women. This membership structure is similar to that of the Pentecostal congregation of Vestmannaeyjar though one may observe there more fishermen and no teachers. Many of the people had recently moved from the rural areas prior to joining the respective congregations.⁸

7.5 THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS AND THE FREE-CHURCH IN REYKJAVIK

In 1893 the Adventist Church investigated the prospects of setting up a mission in Iceland. Their emissary, a Norwegian, travelled for a few weeks and visited the pastor of the first Lutheran Free-Church at Reyðarfjörður Rev. Lárus Halldórsson (see Chapter 6.4.2), who was sympathetic towards his cause (Fjk XV, 6 8/2 1898; *ibid* XV, 16 19/4 1898; Austri 10/9 1898). Three years later the Danish Conference of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church decided to send a missionary to Iceland and a Swedish-born of Norwegian upbringing was chosen. He, D. Ostlund, arrived at Reykjavik in the Autumn of 1897 and quickly became adapted to the Icelandic milieu.

Ostlund's exceptional gift for languages made a strong impression on the Icelanders and was one reason why he was so well received in the press. He became an active and respected member of the IOGT. Being a printer by occupation, he soon set up his own printing shop and became acquainted with the writers and journalists who patronized his business. Within 5 weeks he preached in Icelandic and after 6 months time he spoke and wrote the language fluently (Isaf 12/2 1898; Þjóð L, 5 28/1 1898; *ibid* L, 8 11/2 1898).

People flocked to hear his lectures and in his reports to headquarters he mentioned that up to 400 people sometimes came, with as many being turned away for lack of space in the meeting house (Tröstermanden I, 2, 8 1898). The missionary and the leaders of the Nordic Union of Adventists were optimistic about the progress in Iceland. Soon a small group of people joined the missionary and his family in hours of prayer, Bible reading and Sabbath-day observance. Among these was the family of Rev. Lárus Halldórsson who had moved to Reykjavik in 1899 (Zions Vægter 12/9 1899). For some time they owned, jointly, a printing press. In 1899 to 1902, L. Halldórsson published his own magazine in cause of the free-church.

At this time there was growing interest among some of the workers and craftsmen to start a free church congregation in Reykjavik. These, joined by the Rev. Halldórsson, founded the Evangelical Lutheran Free-Church in Reykjavik with Halldórsson as its pastor. In his own magazine called "Frikirkjan", Halldórsson continued his critique of the state-church system. Ostlund, in his magazine, "Frækorn" voiced his criticism of the State Church in much the same manner as Rev. Halldórsson and many others had since the 1880s.

In taking up the cause of the State Church, docent Jón Helgason, editor of Verði ljós (see Chapter 6.5.4) observed the connection between the

Adventists and the Free-Church pastor in Reykjavík and called his magazine "Adventist Free-Church", claiming that Rev. Halldórsson was an Adventist (V lj 1899, 2:29 and 3:48).

It is likely that many who had first attended the lectures of the Adventist missionary were among those who joined the Lutheran Free-Church congregation founded in the Autumn of 1899. The primary reason for the founding of the congregation was general dissatisfaction with the Church leadership, especially among the more socially active craftsmen. They opposed the hegemony of the officials and the upper classes in the social life of Reykjavík, i.e. the privileges of the officials who, at the Sunday services, occupied the best and most honorable seats in the church for themselves. The dissatisfaction of the "common people" in Reykjavík in church matters was first centered around the issue of the election of the pastor in 1889, concerning the list of candidates to be chosen from (A. Óla 1969: 44f; Sam, IV, 12 1890). Another concrete incidence which aroused this interest was the new laws which somewhat changed the base of the taxes and fees to the Church and the clergy for those living in the towns. This involved an increased economic burden for the workers and craftsmen (Fjk XVI, 37 23/9 1899; Þjóð LI, 53 3/11 1899).

The "Free-Church Movement" in Reykjavík at the turn of the century was, in similarity with the wave of anti-officialism since the 1880s, indueed with opposition towards the Danish Administration. It was criticized for delaying necessary reorganization of the Church structure needed to meet the needs of the growing urban population. The Bishop and the Establishment opposed the founding of the congregation and referred to its leaders as "revolutionaries" (Ó. Ólafsson 1924:18). The Adventists and the Lutheran Free-Church Movement, inspired by ideas of religious freedom, mobilized the people dissatisfied with the State Church.

By 1905, the Adventists had built their own meeting house and had started a school. Also at this time, their magazine was more widely distributed than any other magazine or paper in Iceland (about 4000 copies). This, together with the books published by the mission station formed the basis of their successful colporteur activity. But inspite of the promising beginnings, the Adventist congregation in Iceland never achieved the success its leaders had hoped for and, perhaps, had reason to expect. When established as an officially recognized religious community with government approval in 1908, the congregation had but 32 members (Frækorn 13/3 1908).⁹

Reykjavík remained the centre of Adventist activity but in 1924 a small but active congregation was started in Vestmannaeyjar comprising 32 persons and growing to 60 within the year (R. Guðsteinsson 1965: 83f). The 1930 census shows 421 Adventists in Iceland.

Table 7:1 Occupational Structure of the Adventists in Reykjavik in 1930.

	N	%
High officials	0	-
Merchants	1	2
Middle class ^x	13	22
Craftsmen ^y	6	10
Working class ^z	31	53
Farmers	2	3
Students	6	10
	59	100

^x What is referred to here and in the following tables as "middle-class" consists of occupations of different kinds which do not form a homogeneous category; they are grouped together under this heading for the sake of convenience. The occupational classification is based on the occupational title of the individual given in the census and membership lists which often gives very little information of the class position of the individual. This is particularly true of many of the occupational names grouped together here as "middle-class occupations". In this category are included people with supervisory and administrative functions such as master-seaman (captains), foremen, etc.; clerks, commercial agents, business assistants and teachers.

^y It is obvious in the membership lists and the census reports that all the members with the occupational title of craftsman were not formally trained craftsmen. Here also were included skilled and semi-skilled workers engaged in the specific trades who, therefore, should be classified as workers. It is quite impossible to make the necessary distinctions here; thus all are included as craftsmen in the tables.

^z Includes fishermen

Table 7.1 includes only those registered by occupational name in the city census of Reykjavik in 1930. It shows that mainly working class people were members of the Adventist Church.

In due course it became obvious that the Lutheran Free-Church congregation of Reykjavik, as other such congregations, was not motivated by theological opposition to the State Church. It only wanted to be free from the administrative and organizational hegemony of the State as things were at the turn of the century. Partly because of this, the congregation dismissed Rev. L. Halldórsson as pastor at the end of 1902, and engaged another, former State Church clergyman who, in every respect, held to the liturgy and ceremonies of the State Church. Reykjavik was, by then, a

growing city with but one State Church pastor who had one assistant. He welcomed the Free Church pastor as a colleague. In 1903 the independent congregation built its own church and enlarged it in 1905 to room 1000 persons. In 1900, 20 to 25 percent of the population of Reykjavík were members of the congregation. This figure increased to around 33 percent in 1908 (Ó. Ólafsson 1924; F. Bergmann 1901:299; N Kbl 1908, 3). The antagonism between the Lutheran Free-Church congregation and the State Church leadership in Reykjavík was ended by then.

In 1930 there were 8470 members of the Lutheran Free-Church, all of whom belonged to the congregations in Reykjavík and Hafnafjörður, the latter founded in 1913. This constituted 7.8 percent of the total population in Iceland and 26.7 percent of the Reykjavík and Hafnafjörður population (Statistical Abstract 1976:29).

Table 7.2 shows the occupational structure of the Lutheran Free-Church in Reykjavík in 1910. It is based on the City census of 1910 and includes only those registered with information given as to occupational status.

Table 7.2 Occupational Structure of the Free-Church Congregation in Reykjavík: 1910

N	%	
Higher officials	6	1
Merchants	17	2
Middle class	80	10
Craftsmen	180	21
Working class	492	59
Farmers	29	3
Students	32	4
Total	836	100

Table 7.2 shows that 80 percent were working class and craftsmen. These were also the groups who started the congregation. By 1910, there were also a few intellectuals and officials among the members who opposed the State Church for ideological reasons but did not figure as religious dissenters.

7.6 THE RELIGIOUS MILIEU IN REYKJAVÍK AROUND THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

Except for the Plymouth Brethern and the Pentecostalists, who were only of minor importance for the development of the religious life during the period of study, Reykjavík clearly became the centre of the new religious ideas and trends which shaped the religious pattern of the 20th century in Iceland. In addition to the previously mentioned groups and ideas, others found their way to Reykjavík as will be described in the following.

Just prior to the turn of the century one of the young and promising theologians and a teacher at the Theological Seminary, Jón Helgason, began introducing German Liberal Theology and Biblical Criticism, and soon won

his colleagues to his side. These men were the leaders of the Icelandic church during the first decades of the 20th century. In 1897, a young student at the University of Copenhagen returned home to found the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) which he had become acquainted with in Copenhagen. Spiritualism and Theosophy were also introduced in Iceland about the same time and became very popular.

The arrival of all the new religious ideas and interest groups in the city created a new kind of religious polemics in the press and public settings. New doctrines and ideas were introduced and presented to the people in Reykjavík who got access to religious meetings and services of the different groups. Controversies often broke out among the new groups and between them and the established Church: religious pluralism was by then a fact in Iceland.

Keeping in mind the general critique against the Church leadership and the "secularization" of the intellectual stratum, (Scientific Materialism and Realism), as well as the decreasing involvement in the traditional religious customs, the religious milieu was quite different from what it had been formerly.

As has been shown (Chapter 6.6.3), the governmental administrative changes during the period 1903 - 1907, implied increased disengagement of church and civil society. The state was becoming more secular and it accepted various religious communities along side of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The hegemonial position of the official religious model was broken and the new Icelandic administration increasingly perceived its role as "impartial traffic policeman, setting down certain regulations for the competing religious groups but generally refraining from directly interfering in their competition" (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 76).

As the religious situation in Reykjavík became more pluralistic it also became confusing for many. Much of what had previously been taken for granted in Christian teaching was now being debated and questioned in a manner unfamiliar to the population.

What we observe as we move towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th is an increase in interest for religious matters, an interest synchronous with the increasing religious pluralism. This interest was not anti-Christian even though it was alienated to a great extent from the established religious institutions.¹⁰

The religious scene in Reykjavík from 1895 to 1910 seems to have been extremely confusing and complex. The connections between the new groups appear to be arbitrary and accidental. Several unpredictable developments and changes both on the individual and group levels took place, e.g. the links between the Lutheran Free-Church and the Adventists in Reykjavík mentioned above. But as we move into the second decade of the 20th century, these religious formations assume more stable form, and the main outlines of the religious pattern which characterized the church and the religious situation in general in Iceland for more than half a century were established. The object of this chapter is to make visible these formations and account for the plausibility structures of the religious development in term of sociological factors.

The contour of the religious structure was composed of three trends or movements: the Liberal Theology, the Esoteric Movement (Spiritualism and Theosophy) and the "conservative block" represented by the YMCA and the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Societies.

7.7 THE NEW THEOLOGY

The spokesman of the State Church who reacted the most to the preaching of the Adventists in Reykjavik was the editor of Verði ljós, Docent Jón Helgason. Already in 1898, Helgason had strong misgivings about the special teachings of the Adventists concerning the Sabbath and the Old Testament basis of their doctrines. Shortly after, Jón Helgason began publishing a series of articles on some of the basic doctrines of the Lutheran Church and crucial theological issues of the time, maintaining the stand of the liberal theologians and applying their critical and historical methods.¹¹

During a post-graduate research visit to Germany in 1894, Helgason had become acquainted with Higher Criticism and the Ritzchl school both of which were at that time banished from the Faculty of Theology at the University of Copenhagen. The polemic with the Adventists seems to have been the turning point in this respect: it forced him to reach for arguments in the arsenal of Biblical Criticism (E. Albertsson 1944: 19ff). J. Gíslason 1982:368). Within short time Helgason's closest collaborators also sympathized with Liberal Theology and propagated for its cause. Among these was, notably, H. Nielsson who, in 1908, became a teacher at the Theological Seminary and the President of the seminary, Þorhallur Bjarnarson. In 1906 Þ. Bjarnarson and J. Helgason together started a new church publication called Nýtt kirkjublað which was clearly edited in the spirit of Liberal Theology. By this time influence from Liberal Theology in England was also felt, particularly that of Rev. R. J. Campbell. Several chapters of his book The New Theology were translated into Icelandic and published in Nýtt kirkjublað. Subsequently, Liberal Theology was usually referred to as the "New Theology" in Iceland as opposed to the "Old Theology" of the Lutheran orthodox theologians.

Even if the skillful arguments of the Adventist D. Östlund (there were some who maintained that he was in the right even though the issue was not judged to be very important: see Nýja öldin II,15 1899) might be considered the precipitating factor, the origin and development of Liberal Theology in Iceland cannot be understood unless one takes a wider perspective in the issue.

The introduction of Liberal Theology at this time represented the apologetics of the most qualified and concerned theologians, in a situation where the intellectual stratum, particularly the intellectual elite from the University of Copenhagen, increasingly felt alienated from the Church and its doctrines. This was a theological reaction to the desacralization of cultural life, an issue of contention among the intellectuals in Reykjavik at the turn of the century. These theologians had, themselves, studied at the University of Copenhagen and were, therefore, acquainted

with Scientific Materialism and Realism which had gained a stronghold among Icelanders studying in Copenhagen (Chapter 6.5.3). The theology students at the Seminary in Iceland were initially safeguarded from many of the questions which were responsible for the breakdown of the cultural synthesis which the previous official religious hegemony had legitimized. However, as stated above, until the 1920s, the graduates from the University of Copenhagen were usually chosen for the highest offices within the Church, as teachers at the Theological Seminary and Bishops. Thus, the relatively few Icelandic theologians who graduated from the University of Copenhagen between 1880 and 1900 (see Tables 3.3 and 3.5) exerted considerable influence over the church and religious life in Iceland in the beginning of the 20th century. All of the leading spokesmen of Liberal Theology during the first two decades of the 20th century were candidates from the University of Copenhagen.

According to the liberal theologians, the main objective of modern theology was to bring the essence of the Christian teaching into harmony with the scientific world-view. Helgason emphasized several times in his articles the proposition that scientific progress and social development had increased the understanding of the significance of human personality and the necessity of freedom for its development. This was also to be taken into consideration in the teaching of the Church and no outdated dogmas contrary to the intellect of an honest and enlightened mind were allowed to interfere with the individual receiving the grace of God. The liberal theologians claimed that conservative attitudes and outdated doctrines were to blame for the great turnaway of people from the Church. In refusing to accept the progress of science the Church would place itself out of contact with modern times and jeopardize its influence over people. Modern research and science, it was claimed, were of great positive value for the Christian religion. The application of these to the historical sources would reveal the true essence of the Christian religion.¹²

This theology was an attempt at resynthesizing the church, science and human progress. Compared to the previous synthesis, the new construction emphasised the psychological aspects along with the subjective meaning of the Christian message. It was less concerned about the moral order of society as the objective foundation of the Church than with the religious conscience of the individual. The individual, as well as the theologian and the scientist, was to be free from all kinds of authority in seeking the truth. According to this ideal, freedom was the only guarantee for the right course in seeking grace. The model was no longer the social order; rather, the freedom of the individual, a principle highly regarded by the new bourgeoisie which was establishing itself in Reykjavík, and by the intellectuals. Helgason's articles were also well received by the newspapers and magazines (see, e.g. *Isaf* XXXV, 6, 46 1908; *Fimreiðin* VI, 1900: 141; *ibid* XVI 1910: 67).

Considering the former firm status of the Lutheran orthodoxy, the new theology quickly built up a stronghold in Iceland. In 1908 Þorhallur Bjarnarson became Bishop and Jón Helgason was named President of the Theological Seminary. He became professor of theology at the University of

Iceland in 1911 together with Haraldur Nielsson. From that time on, Liberal Theology dominated the entire Faculty of Theology until the 1940s. The Clergy Meeting of 1909, the first under the leadership of the new bishop, was a manifestation of the Liberal Theology (E. Albertsson 1944:24).

The policy of the liberal theologians in the area of religious education was primarily to emphasize the history of Christianity and stories from the Bible itself in the schools and to let the clergy care for education in dogmatical matters. This policy was gradually institutionalized in the 1920s (Chapter 4.2).

7.8 THE YMCA AND THE LUTHERAN MISSION SOCIETIES

7.8.1 The Danish Inner-Mission

The Danish-Inner Mission had its origins in religious revivals among lay-people during the first half of the 19th century. It seems to have been, initially, a popular reaction against the official Enlightenment theology of the pastors of the State Church. It was pietistic and in many respects conservative in doctrinal and sacramental issues. In the latter half of the century it included more clergymen and eventually became a movement of considerable influence within the Church. In relation to an extensive reorganization of the Christian youth work in Denmark the Inner-Mission Society founded a special committee for Sunday-schools and youth societies (Udvalg for Børnegudstjenester og Ynglingeforeninger) in 1883, which conducted much of the Christian work among children and youth in Denmark including the Young Men's Christian Associations (YMCA) (E. Olesen 1966:34). In the 1890s, Icelandic Church leaders contacted this committee concerning the introduction of youth societies into Iceland (P. Pétursson 1981: 179f).

The cultural and leisure activities of the YMCA in Copenhagen differed from the ruling ideas of the pietistical Inner-Mission Societies. These activities were included in the programme as a part of their policy of Christian up-bringing of youth in the struggle against the "temptations of city life". One of the Icelandic students at the university, Friðrik Friðriksson, became a member of the YMCA and participated in the administration of the youth division for boys 14-17 years of age. He became the leader of the movement in Reykjavík.

It is rather strange that the Inner-Mission which was growing into a large and influential Society in the church life in Denmark in the latter half of the 19th century, had no activity or representation in Iceland. In 1900, it had 158 salaried missionaries, 86 book sellers (colporteurs), 371 mission houses, 525 Sunday Schools and 2288 Sunday School teachers, yet none of theses had reached Iceland (P. G. Lindhardt 1958:352). There seems to have been some discussion concerning this among the Inner-Mission people who, without specifying it, saw enormous difficulties in starting work in Iceland (Den indre Missions Tidende 11/5 1902).

These difficulties, no doubt, had to do with the political situation. As described above, the anti-Danish attitude in Iceland could be exploited by anyone negative to a cause connected with trends in Denmark. The work of the Inner-Mission in Denmark was seldom mentioned in the publications of the Icelanders living in Copenhagen. On those occasions when mention was made of the Society in the Icelandic press, it was usually done in a voice of contempt. Emphasize was placed on its intolerance and conservatism and it was referred to as the breeding grounds of political support for the despotism of the conservative government, in particular the Estrup government. This situation continued well into the 20th century (Kbl III, 4, 1893; Kbl V, 8, 1895; Þjóðv VI, 8 31/12 1896; ibid XV, 42 31/10 1901; ibid XVI, 22 30/5 1902; Norðurland III, 36 4/6 1904; Fjk XXII, 38 15/9 1905; ibid XXIII, 37 10/8 1906; Rvík VIII, 29 20/4 1907).

It was not until 1901 that the Danish Inner-Mission appeared in Iceland. The man who was to lead the work was a young theological candidate from the Theological Seminary in Reykjavík, Sigurbjörn A. Gíslason, who, after having completed his studies travelled to Denmark to work for a year with the Inner-Mission. At its summer convention in 1901, it was decided by the leadership of the society that Gíslason was to be engaged as their salaried missionary to Iceland (Den inre Missions Tidende 11/5 1902). The Christian Youth societies had, however, been introduced earlier in Iceland.

7.8.2 The Introduction of the Christian Youth Societies into Iceland

The first attempts to introduce the Christian Youth Societies into Iceland follows closely the increasing concern of some clergymen over the religious situation in the country in the early 1890s, and especially the fear that the Church was losing its hold on the younger generation. Further, it was observed that this was more or less a general problem but that the situation was most critical in the fishing villages and the towns. Such views appeared in the Kirkjublaðið, edited by Þórhallur Bjarnarson, who contacted the Union of Norwegian and Danish Christian Youth Societies. Through him a country pastor in the Northern district of Húnavatns established contact with the movement which provided him with further information. Pastor Hjörleifur Einarsson, who was also dean in the district of Húnavatns promoted the cause but received little enthusiasm from his colleagues. Nevertheless, he and some of his neighbouring pastors tried without success to start youth societies in their parishes. Pastor H. Einarsson's Society, founded in 1897, included about 20 members and lasted for only a few years. The pastor was also active as a leader of a local temperance society of which the Christian Youth Society was a branch. It is likely that Einarsson's concern was at least partly due to the extremely low participation in Holy Communion in his deanery (see Table 4.2).

7.8.3 The YMCA in Reykjavík

F. Friðriksson, who arrived in Reykjavík in 1897 with the intention of establishing the YMCA in Iceland, was not received by an understanding audience due to his missionary methods and "Inner-Mission" style of evangelization which he had with him from Denmark. Thus, he was quite pessimistic about the progress of the work in Iceland.

According to him, the proper way to commence work was to gather a group of men between the ages of 17 and 40 who were devoted to the Association and who would become the religious and social basis for the youth divisions. This was the pattern of the YMCA elsewhere (F. Friðriksson 1933:18). But even without such a group in Reykjavík to serve as the basis for others, the YMCA had great success. In January, 1899 a Christian Youth Society for boys was founded in Reykjavík with 50 members, and by the end of the same year the active members numbered 215. Also by this time a girls division had started with 65 members (Kristilegt Unglingafélag, May-December 1899).

The reasons for this success were several. Basically it was due to the method of beginning with age groups below 17 years of age. In the beginning, all members were below the age of 17 and no ordinary governing committee was established which made this the exclusive responsibility of Friðriksson (F. Friðriksson 1933: 46). Obviously, Friðriksson had the quality of reaching the youth of Reykjavík. Many agreed that he had charismatic qualities as youth leader, but several other circumstances also help to explain the fact that within one year the youth society included more than two-thirds of all the boys in Reykjavík between the ages of 12 and 16 years.

From the beginning Friðriksson was active as a leader within the youth branch of the IOGT and for a few years he was editor of its children's magazine Æskan, which he used for evangelical purposes. His studies at the Theological Seminary and, therefore, the eventuality that he might become a minister of the Church made his work among children and youth accepted and appreciated. As described above, the clergy were still entrusted with the task of supervising the primary education and were looked upon as experts in matters of child-rearing. The parish pastor of Reykjavík welcomed Friðriksson and used him as an assistant, asking him to preach on several occasions and to assist in the educational preparation of the youth to be confirmed. It was actually the group of boys confirmed in the Spring of 1898 that formed the basis of the society started in 1899 (P. Pétursson 1981: 198f).

Friðriksson himself maintained a small primary school for his livelihood which gave him the opportunity of coming into contact with children and youth who might join the Society..

Initially, Friðriksson received the support of his fellow students and teachers at the Theological Seminary. The students conducted a Sunday school for children in which Friðriksson participated as one of the teachers. In 1899, this Sunday school was more or less merged with the YMCA as its Youth division.

In 1902, a YMCA was formally established in Reykjavík with a special governing committee. On this occasion, the first secretary of the international organization of the YMCA was present along with the Icelandic Bishop and other representatives of the State Church. Among those who Friðriksson appointed to the governing committee was Engineer Knud Zimsen, one of the very few Icelandic students in Copenhagen to participate in the Inner-Mission activities and the YMCA together with Friðriksson. Zimsen was a member of the governing committee and a leader of the Sunday school of the YMCA for many years. He was politically active, particularly in the local politics of Reykjavík for the Conservatives and was mayor of the town from 1914 to 1932.

Another of his student friends whom he had known in Copenhagen and who was appointed by Friðriksson to the governing committee was Haraldur Nielsson. However, due to his liberal theology and, later, spiritualistic leanings, he was not re-elected to the governing body. Zimsen was the only member to be re-elected when this body was reconstructed in 1908; the new members were all chosen from among the fellows who had joined the Association in the beginning and who had received their religious socialization within the society, and looked upon Friðriksson as their unquestioned leader. These first-generation members composed the governing committee for decades to come and were the backbone of the Association.

In 1902, special attempts were made to ascertain the confessional basis of the YMCA in Iceland. Therefore, a special supervising committee was founded including the Bishop, the President of the Theological Seminary and the parish pastor of Reykjavík. The main reason for this was the theological position of the Danish Inner-Mission which, because of its ties with the YMCA in Denmark, was in a position to impose its conservative basis on the Association despite the non-confessional stance of the International Organization (Lindhardt 1958: 353; E. Olesen 1966: 59f). Another reason was Friðriksson's secret sympathy for Catholicism on certain issues which some of the Danish leaders were well aware of (F. Friðriksson 1933: 208; P. Pétursson 1981: 204f).

The conservative and confessional character of the YMCA in Iceland became more outstanding in time, particularly since the Icelandic Church leadership turned increasingly towards a more liberal theological position. As a result of this, the supervising committee was no longer consulted by the YMCA leaders and ceased to function.

The social activities of the YMCA flourished with many divisions and branches being founded including sports clubs, abstinence societies, choirs, brass bands and a group of scouts. In the very first year, a small library was established for the members, and an evening school for boys who did not have access to grammar-school education. By the second decade of the century the average age of the members had increased and consequently, a greater proportion of the workers were gainfully employed in the labour market.

Table 7.3 shows the YMCA membership figures. The association began with a large youth division (the Christian Youth Society) whose members gradually progressed to the next division. Between the years 1903 and 1905, attendance and activity were high in the society, but from 1906 to 1908, conflicts arose within the leadership concerning economical matters which was one of the reasons for the departure of Friðriksson to Denmark for a year. Initially the society suffered from his departure but soon overcame its difficulties with the help of those who had grown up within the society and who gradually assumed administrative and leadership functions within the organization.

Table 7.3 Members of the YMCA in Reykjavík: 1900-1929

	Main division	Youth division ages	
		10-13	14-17
1900			215
1903	238	158	
1906	183	214	
1909	98	100	80
1910	113	150	
1913	197	400	
1915	226		
1920	315		
1926	373	300	
1927	363	445	200
1929	305		

Source: Based on the membership lists of YMCA kept in the archives of the society in Reykjavík and numerous reports appearing in the following magazines: Bjarmi, Mbl and the monthly publications of the YMCA.

Table 7.4 shows the occupation and social status of the parents of the members of the main division (above 17 years of age) and the younger division (14-17 years of age) in 1903. Only those with occupation or social designation on the lists are included. For the main division, the information is lacking to a large extent (c.f. Table 7.3).

Furthermore, the table shows that in 1903, the members of the Youth division came from families of all classes which is not strange considering that the Society included more than half of all the boys of that age group in Reykjavík. But, in comparison with the occupational structure of the parents of those whose participation continues after the age of 17, we see that the proportion of the boys from workers homes is higher in the main division than in the youth division, and that a surprisingly high percentage of the main division came from homes where the father was deceased.

Table 7.4 Occupational and Social Status of Parents* of Members of the YMCA
in 1903

	Youth division		Main division	
	N	%	N	%
Officials	5	2.9	1	1.0
Merchants	12	6.9	0	0.0
Middle class	12	6.9	13	13.8
Craftsmen	43	24.6	10	10.6
Fishermen	37	21.1	12	12.8
Workers	34	19.4	29	30.8
Farmers	10	5.7	8	8.5
Housewife	2	1.1	0	0.0
Widow	20	11.1	21	22.3
	---	---	---	---
	175	100	94	99.8

* Where the father is lacking the occupational status of the mother is given

Source: All figures are based on calculations made by the author of the membership lists found in the archives of the YMCA in Reykjavík. This applies as well to the following tables.

Table 7.5 shows the occupational status of the members of the main division in 1903 above the age of 20 years and, therefore, already established in the occupational structure of the labour market.

Table 7.5 Occupation of the Members of the YMCA above the age of 20 in 1903

	N	%
Officials (higher).....	3	4
Merchants.....	2	2
Middle class.....	9	11
Craftsmen, skilled workers.	35	41
Fishermen.....	20	24
Workers.....	7	8
Students.....	8	10
	---	---
Total	84	100

Those classified as officials (mainly clergymen) and merchants were adult men who had joined the Association in 1902 mainly in order to sit in the first governing committee and were, therefore, not typical members.

Friðriksson had started work among grammar school students who gathered together in a small Bible study group. He also stressed the work among the fishermen whose occupation was of increasing importance for the economic development of the city. The fishermen were still, by and large, not organized into trade unions; however, their social consciousness was rising as witnessed by their activity within IOGT and YMCA in Reykjavik in the beginning of the century.

Table 7.6 indicates an upward mobility for the members. The tendency is towards becoming more "middle class" as the categories workers and especially fishermen decrease, whereas craftsmen and skilled labourers continue to be a large group throughout the period, comprising about one-third of all the members.

For all years, a majority of the higher officials were clergymen. The merchants comprised a slowly increasing group: 9 percent in 1924 from less than 1 percent in 1903. A closer study of those who were members in 1903 and also in 1918 reveals this trend more clearly. Table 7.7 shows that 36 members fall into this category. Furthermore, this table also shows that the occupational status of the fathers of 73 members of the Main division in 1903. One can see that in 1918, one-fourth of the long-time members were merchants, compared to none in 1903. None of the fathers included in the table were merchants. Very few of the older members were workers or fishermen. This group of faithful members comprised the backbone of the Association and were responsible for most of its governing and leadership functions.

Table 7.6 Occupation of Members of the Main Division of YMCA, 1903-1929 in Percent

	1903	1906	1912	1915	1919	1924	1929
Higher officials	1.3	3.9	9.7	8.2	6.5	4.5	4.7
Merchants	0.8	1.1	2.6	3.2	6.2	9.0	8.8
Middle class	15.6	19.4	31.0	23.7	29.2	25.7	27.9
Craftsmen	35.4	36.7	39.0	34.7	35.7	27.8	35.0
Fishermen	20.7	14.4	6.2	6.9	6.9	8.0	7.0
Workers	14.8	8.9	6.2	14.2	10.0	17.0	12.5
Students	11.4	15.6	5.3	9.1	5.5	8.0	4.1
	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	237	180	113	219	291	335	297

(Those members lacking occupational titles are not included in this table, therefore, the total figures are not the same as those in Table 7.3. This applies especially for 1912, for which year those not included amount to 30 percent; for the other lists the figure is less than 10%).

Table 7.7 Occupational status of the long-time members of the Main Division of the YMCA in Reykjavik in both 1903 and 1918, and of the fathers of 73 members of the Main Division in 1903.

	fathers 1903: %	members 1903: %	members 1918: %

Higher officials	1	3	6
Merchants	0	0	25
Middle class	18	17	25
Craftsmen	14	30	33
Fishermen	16	22	8
Workers	40	17	3
Farmers	11	3	0
Students	0	8	0
	100	100	100
Total (n)	73	36	36

7.8.4 The Moral Teachings of the YMCA and their Effects

In line with the YMCA policy in Copenhagen, the YMCA in Reykjavík aimed at offering leisure and social youth activities as an alternative to the depraved life of the city. Contrary to others concerned with the welfare of the young people, Friðriksson did not adopt an attitude negative of city-life in general; rather, he attacked only those elements hazardous for the youth.

In his teachings, Friðriksson placed heavy emphasis on the moral upgrading of "his boys", the teenagers of Reykjavík. He wanted them to be the model of proper conduct, orderliness, obedience, abstinence, thriftiness and cooperation. His work was much appreciated by the parents and business leaders of Reykjavík, and Friðriksson was generally looked upon as the "moral reformer of the youth".

The "hero" for the boys, as could be seen in YMCA literature, was the founder of the Association, Englishman George Williams, who, from being a poor lad and shop assistant, worked himself up to become a rich and powerful merchant because of his loyalty to his superiors, his trust in God, and his thriftiness in economical matters.

In the YMCA the boys received training through organized social activities and were indoctrinated with a positive attitude towards practical skills and knowledge. In their evening school several of the working class boys, who later became successful in business, studied foreign languages. The "spirit" was individualism which focused on the religious and moral life of the individual person for the purpose of self-improvement and moral betterment. This "Protestant Ethic" fostered the will to succeed in life, and through the association several of the boys were

provided with opportunities and skills which enabled them to succeed in the new socio-economical situation rising in Reykjavik at the beginning of the century (P. Pétursson 1981: 268f). In due time several of the faithful members of the association not only succeeded economically, but became influential as the social and economical guardians of the Association. This was the basis upon which Friðriksson became an influential religious leader in Iceland.

7.8.5 Several Societies in a United Front

In comparing the leaders of the YMCA, the YWCA¹³ and the Lutheran Mission Societies, the involvement of the same persons and families is observed. The Women's Mission Society, founded in 1904, was the only active foreign mission society until the founding of the Men's Mission Society in 1920. These were small societies of 40 to 70 members each. The ordinary members, those not in the governing boards, were mainly from the working and lower middle classes. (Based on the memberships lists and comments of the present leaders of the societies who knew many of those on the lists or their families).

In 1903, the Society for Christian Parish Work (Kristlieg safnaðarstarfsemi) was founded with a governing body composed of, among others, Sigurbjörn Gíslason, who worked for the Danish Inner-Mission, Friðriksson, and the parish pastor of Reykjavik. This society intended to initiate work within the National Church similar to that of the Inner-Mission in Denmark, but little or no success was achieved. Although limited social work was maintained for several years, the society was discontinued in 1910 (Bæjarskrár Rvík 1905 and 1909). S. Gíslason seems to have expected a religious revival in Reykjavik during these years lead by the Inner-Mission, but this, too failed (Den indre Mission Tidende 11/5 1902).

The success experienced by the YMCA in Reykjavik was not based on a popular religious revival but on a social revival among the youth lead by Friðriksson. But he gained considerable religious influence over several of the members who became active in church life, e.g. serving the Parish Council, the Mission Societies and the Evangelical Publishing Societies. (Some members of the governing committees of the YMCA were members of the editorial board of the publication Bjarmi in 1907 to 1916)

Towards the end of the first decade of the 20th century, these societies united into a "front" as can be seen in the participation of members from these societies in the parish council elections of 1908. The majority of the parish council has subsequently been composed of people from these societies. In the election of a second pastor to the parish in Reykjavik in 1910, these same people mobilized and succeeded in electing one of the "first boys of Friðriksson", who, as a young lad, had been a member of his Bible study group and among the first to join the Christian Youth Society in 1899. He had also participated in the YMCA work and was elected in 1911 as a member of its governing committee. Most Christian work among the children and teenagers of Reykjavik was thus conducted under the auspices of the YMCA in close cooperation with the parish government of the

city .Since then, the YMCA Sunday school and the youth divisions of the society were regarded more or less as a part of the National Church and belonged to the parish work in Reykjavik.

The magazine Bjarmi should be considered an organ of the above mentioned front which, theologically, was similar to the Danish Inner-Mission, i.e. conservative and confessional. According to its interpretation of the religious situation, growing disbelief in the authority of the sacraments and the confessions was the main problem confronting the church. It was felt that society and the spiritual life of the people were undergoing a thorough de-christianization process and that the only proper reaction from the Church and the religiously concerned people was to strive for a religious revival based on the orthodox Lutheran teachings as presented in the old religious books and beliefs of former generations. Contemporary Liberal Theology was viewed as old Rationalistic theology "reborn", and as a sign of secularization itself, i.e. a retreat on behalf of the Church and theologians, and an acceptance of the modern age poisoned by scepticism and disbelief (see, e.g. Bjarmi I, 2, 22 1907; S. Stefánsson 1914 and 1916; Lögr. XI, 59 20/12 1916; Lögr XII, 28 13/6 1917).

In many respects, this ideology was similar to that of the Icelandic clergymen in N. America who, since the 1880s, had been critical of church life in Iceland (Chapter 6.5.4). They, too, had propagated for active mission work and religious revival, and in theological disputes the leaders of the Icelandic Lutheran Church in N. America joined this front in its critique of Liberal Theology and the Church leadership in Iceland. During the first two decades of the century, this front occasionally suggested separation of church and state as a means of improving the Christian life of the nation. This was especially advocated by S. Gíslason who, from time to time conferred with the Christian sects. In their combined efforts to combat religious apathy and the secular spirit of the age, and in their indictment of Liberal Theology, Spiritualism and Theosophy, the conservative front and the sects had a common enemy.¹⁴

Friðriksson's theology was well aligned with the conservative theology of the front, but he never advocated the idea of a free-church, and he rejected all suggestions of cooperation with the sects; neither was he keen on allowing the YMCA, as such, to become involved in theological disputes even if several of those most active in the contemporary theological and political debates were "his own boys". Additionally, direct references to the theological and political issues of the day never appeared in the monthly magazines published by the YMCA. This policy was maintained in the latter half of the second decade when the conservative theological stance of the YMCA within the front was more firmly established (Friðriksson 1948:34). But then, the social significance of the association was less prominent due to the presence of new institutions and organizations which had taken over some of the functions previously held by the YMCA (such as the National Youth Society, trade unions, secondary schools and sports clubs). The YMCA became the bastion of conservative theology which sustained the front against Liberal Theology in that it became a theological training centre of new leaders of the conservative front.

Financially, the Danish Inner-Mission was the backbone of the YMCA in Reykjavík and the formal owner of the YMCA quarters there. When Iceland gained its independence in 1918 however, the governmental body of the Danish Inner-Mission decided to relieve itself of its financial responsibilities in Iceland, and the society in Reykjavík took over these responsibilities. By this time the society had become more economically independent due to the contributions of the more well-to-do members (P. Pétursson 1981: 257).

As mentioned earlier, the magazine Bjarmi, usually associated in public opinion with the Danish Inner-Mission, sustained the front against Liberal Theology on behalf of the followers of conservative theology. Many who disdained the Danish Inner-Mission yet supported the YMCA. Gíslason, who was the main force behind the publication of Bjarmi, and its owner since 1916, did not succeed in establishing an Inner-Mission Society in Iceland. His work suffered from the "Danish" label frequently used by his opponents. Nevertheless, he was supported financially by the Danish organization until 1927.

It is likely that the success of Liberal Theology depended to a great extent on the association commonly made between conservative theology and the infamous Danish Inner-Mission. Despite the theological and organizational relations between the two groups, the YMCA in Reykjavík managed to avoid the "Danish" stigma which should rightfully be considered a major political feat of the skillful Friðriksson. The financial ties between the YMCA in Reykjavík and the Danish Inner-Mission were never actually publicized and did not come to the attention of the public at that time.

These ties and the close relation of Friðriksson to the leaders of the Danish movement made him cautious in the national political issues of the day. His political skills, in this respect, were expressed, e.g. in relation to the national festivities in 1911 at the centennial anniversary of the birth of Jón Sigurðsson (17/6 1811). In his speech at the meeting of the YMCA on this occasion, Friðriksson expressed his admiration for the national leader, his character and political contribution to the national upgrading and thanked God for giving the nation such a capable leader. At the same time, he uttered his dislike for the demagogical aspects of contemporary politics and the low standard of its means and methods. He stressed that the policy of YMCA was to stay out of party politics and considered it an important task to keep the youth outside the political game. They should, instead, focus on improving their own life and on training themselves in Christian virtues until their time would come to do great things for the Fatherland.

The YMCA did not officially, as did many other groups, place a wreath on the grave of Sigurðsson on this occasion; instead, the youngest division, which the following day ended its summer meetings, placed flowers on the grave and held a religious memorial service (Bjarmi V, 13 1911).

The national flag of Iceland was not officially used by the Icelandic YMCA until in 1915 when mandated through law by the King. At this time the flag was consecrated at a special religious ceremony. These examples show

how Friðriksson succeeded in creating outlets for the patriotic sentiments of the young members without offending the Danish authorities (P. Pétursson 1981: 254).

7.9 THE ESOTERIC MOVEMENT

The modern Occult or Esoteric teachings first gained a stronghold among the intellectuals, the new bourgeoisie and the middle classes in Iceland just after the turn of the century. Of these movements, the largest, and the one with the broadest public support, was the Spiritualists. At about the same time, Theosophy was introduced, and together they created an interest in esoteric teachings and psychic phenomena which grew steadily throughout the second and third decades of the 20th century. Associated with this movement was an interest among the bourgeoisie in the Freemasons which, in several respects, as will be discussed below, deserve to be treated together with the Spiritualists and Theosophists as part of the Esoteric Movement in Iceland.

7.9.1 The Spiritualists

The visions and teachings of the 18th century Swedish scientist E. Swedenborg, are usually seen as one of the main preludes to modern Spiritualism which started spreading in the West about the middle of the 19th century (Wilson 1970: 169; Briem 1922: 155; Nelson 1969: 50ff). The pattern of Spiritualism in Iceland agrees to this, at least in part. Among the first to participate in the Psychical Research were those who had been attached to the teachings of Swedenborg concerning the existence of spirits.

The first active interest in spiritualism and in occult phenomena among the urban middle-class is noted in Akureyri. Among these were several business people both from private companies and from the district Cooperative Society (KEA) which had established its centre in Akureyri. Included was the editor of the local political paper, Einar Hjörleifsson who adopted the surname Kvaran in 1916. He was famous as a popular writer, the most distinguished in the first three decades of this century (S. Einarsson 1948: 97f). Kvaran conducted Spiritualistic experiments after having been inspired by the book The Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death, written by one of the leaders of the British Society for Physical Research, F. W. H. Myers, and published in London in 1903.

In the Autumn of 1904, Kvaran moved to Reykjavik in order to take over another political paper, and there he continued his experiments which eventually evolved into a larger movement of Spiritualism in Iceland. In Reykjavik he was aided by a foreign lady who was acquainted with Spiritualist seances. He managed to engage several of his friends and colleagues,

and eventually they founded the Research Unit for the Study of Psychic Phenomena (Tilraunafélagið), modeled after the British Society for Physical Research.

The Research Unit was more or less a secret society which did not publish proceedings of meetings or membership lists, but contemporary and later sources indicate that many of the leading people in politics, business and culture were included. The society had a formal structure and a governing committee headed by Kvaran. A special house was built for research and a medium was engaged on a more or less full time basis.

Contemporary sources maintain that the society had 80 members in 1908 (Frækorn Nov. 1908), and one of the members later revealed that up to 70 members gathered at the meetings when the society was at its peak around 1909 to 1912 (Nielsson 1952: 28).

In the Spring of 1905, a heated debate arose concerning the activities of the Research Unit and the psychical phenomena which had aroused a great deal of interest in Reykjavík, and spread throughout the country. Initially, or until 1912, the issue became entangled in party politics. The leaders of the former Valtyrisk policy (Chapter 5.4) in Reykjavík (one of whom was Kvaran), were among the first to become engaged with psychic research. This political party, supported by many leftists and nationalists, assumed a position in opposition to the new internal government, with the leader of the Home-Rule party being the first Icelandic minister in 1904. Those papers supporting the Minister and the Home-Rule party opposed the Research Unit and the Spiritualists hypotheses which had become accepted by the members of the unit. These papers (Reykjavík, Þjóðólfur and Lögrétta), derided the whole matter and used it against the political opposition.

The opposition papers Isafold (edited by Björn Jónsson), and Fjallkonan (edited by E. H. Kvaran until 1906), and to a lesser degree Þjóðviljinn (edited by the politician Skúli Thoroddsen), supported the Spiritualists and accused their opponents of being prejudiced and foolhearty for refusing to acknowledge the progress of science in these areas¹⁵

In 1907 there was a great upsurge in nationalistic fervour which resulted in a political coalition lead and channeled by the opposition. Additionally, a political alliance was formed including the most radical and fundamental nationalists among the intellectuals, called the National Guards. In the 1908 elections, this political alliance, in opposition to the Home-Rule administration (Chapter 5.4), won the majority in Alþing and Björn Jónsson became the Minister of Iceland. The National Guard's press organ Ingólfur did not oppose the Spiritualists, nor did the Fimreiðin, a magazine edited by Valtyr Guðmundsson, even though the editors seem to have opposed to the Spiritualists theories. This was most likely due to the party-political alliances.

One of the reasons why the issue of Spiritualism lost its party-political connections in the second decade was the dismantling of the Research Unit in 1912, due to the death of its chief medium. However, the spiritualistic seances were continued by the leaders and other persons interested in psychical phenomena, and the leaders frequently lectured

publically and wrote on the matter. On the whole, interest in Spiritualism and esoteric teachings was growing, and demands for seances and literature among the general public increasing. In 1918, the Icelandic Society for Psychical Research, ISPR, was founded, publishing its own press organ Morgunn from 1920. This society was under the leadership of much the same people as had been in charge of the Research Unit, and its president, E. H. Kvaran, by then retired from political life, became editor of the magazine and full-time writer, receiving financial support from the government as a novelist.

The fundamental presuppositions of the ISPR was the "fact" that the soul survived bodily death and the "proof" that it was possible to come into contact with the spirits of the dead; but it was also stated that this claim was not to be interpreted as a declaration of the individual conviction of the members of the society. It was to be an "open society" for "seekers" of the spiritual truths. Furthermore, the society was to be a source of information about psychical research and aim towards increasing the interest of the nation for spiritual matters in general (E. H. Kvaran in a speech at the foundation meeting of the ISPR Mbl VI, 44 24/12 1918).

Initially, the society had about 200 members and grew to 443 members within a year, most of whom lived in Reykjavík (Bjarmi XIII, 1 1919; Morgunn I, 1920). Only the membership list of 1919, which was published in Morgunn, 1920, is available for the period of this study, but it appears that the membership increased. It is claimed that the membership reached 1200 by the end of the 1930s (The former president of the ISPR, Jon Auðun, in a personal interview with the author in May, 1978).

7.9.2. The Spiritualists and the Church

According to the ethics of the Spiritualists and often stressed by their leaders in Iceland, the certainty of life after bodily death was to be the incentive for moral upgrading in this life: people would have to take the consequences in the life to come. It was felt that this would certainly counteract the devastating effects of materialism on the moral life of individuals¹⁶. This was in short the basis on which the missionary activities of the leaders were carried out as they travelled about preaching and holding lectures.

The most prominent among the spiritualist leaders in Iceland repeatedly declared that the results of psychical research were of crucial importance for the church. They too, as did the liberal theologians, pointed out the growing gap between the church and science and the spreading disbelief among common people in the teachings of the church and in its authority in spiritual matters in the Western world. They saw in psychical research a new knowledge capable of countering disbelief, and furthermore, perceived the Spiritualistic revelations as the best means for bringing people back to the Church. Thus, Spiritualism was an open invitation for the Church, an offer which it found difficult for the Church to turn down. This was stressed, e.g. by E. H. Kvaran in this first lengthy essay on Spiritualism

in a publication of the Icelandic Literary Society in 1905 (Skírnir LXXIX), at the opening speech of the foundational meeting of ISPR in 1918, and on countless other occasions (see also Nielsson 1922a: 96, 178; 1922b: 29 and in several places in his collection of sermons). According to the Spiritualists, the miracles and supernatural events of the Bible were much the same kind of phenomena as those observed in their seances.

The most influential link between Spiritualism and the Icelandic Church was Haraldur Nielsson, Professor of Theology (Chapter 7.7). As a result of his and E. H. Kvaran's leadership, Spiritualism became a popular movement which assimilated the teachings of the Christian religion (even if they were reinterpreted according to the principles of Spiritualism). H. Nielsson was a member of the Research Unit from the beginning and was vice-president of the ISPR. Politically, he supported the opposition party of 1904 - 1909 (H. Nielsson 1907). As stated earlier, he was one of the first theologians to adopt Liberal Theology, but he was never comfortable with its rationalistic standpoint towards miracles and the supernatural. Spiritualism was for him, and for many others, the solution to a religious crisis which rescued their Christian faith and reconstructed their belief rendering it compatible with a modern world-view (see Nielsson 1916: introduction: 64ff, 127ff; 1922a: 178; J. Jónsson 1968: 72f; R. Kvaran 1968: 113ff).

H. Nielsson and E. H. Kvaran maintained the policy that the Spiritualists should refrain from establishing a special congregation or sect, a policy in line with their understanding of psychic research as functional for the church. The Inner-Mission leader and several critics of the State Church were of quite different opinion. They encouraged H. Nielsson to leave his office as instructor of theological students and the Church together with other spiritualists. Otherwise, it was claimed, the church could not be faithful to its own confessional basis. Nielsson declared that his loyalties were within the Church and referred to the obligation of Christian people, especially within the Lutheran Church, to follow one's conscience in religious matters. True faith, he said, was not contrary to the facts of science. The same argument was used by the liberal theologians who were also accused of departing from the confessional basis of the Church (Nielsson 1916: 126).

In 1914 a group of Spiritualists formed a special committee to organize regular Sunday worship services every second week in the largest church building in Reykjavík (owned by the Free-Church congregation) with Nielsson as the pastor. These services were very popular and well attended, and were continued until Nielsson's death in 1928. Many people in Reykjavík and throughout the country looked upon him as their religious leader and turned to him for pastoral care (Mbl VI, 20 30/11 1918). His collection of sermons was used in the traditional household services which were still maintained at this time in some rural areas. The basic source of inspiration for these sermons was Spiritualism (Nielsson 1920: introduction). It has been maintained that Nielsson was the initiator of the only popular religious revival in Iceland (Guðmundsson 1938:40; Kirkjuritið 1937: 117; B. Kristjánsson 1947:300).

In the beginning the Church leaders showed a somewhat ambivalent and doubtful attitude toward the activities of the Spiritualists. The policy was soon adopted, that there was no reason to oppose the psychical research carried on for scientific purposes but that Spiritualism should not become a religion in which the medium and spirits would become a substitute for church-religion (see Mbl 1906: 3, 5, 6, 16 and Helgason 1917: 26ff).

It can be stated in general that only exceptionally did the State Church clergy publically oppose the Spiritualists or the Esoteric Societies; as stated above it was mainly the Inner-Mission and the sects which openly confronted them. The relative absence of confrontation between the Church and the Esoteric movement can also be explained by the policy of the leaders of the Spiritualists of not forming religious congregations. Their attempts to relate their activities to science and knowledge had the same effect.

In 1922 this peaceful relationship was shaken somewhat when Jón Helgason (then Bishop), a former Liberal Theology colleague of H. Nielsson, openly declared his disdain for Spiritualism. It was known that the parish pastors of Reykjavik agreed with the Bishop in this matter (they were theological conservatives and members of YMCA). Due mainly to this attitude there arose feelings of aversion between the Spiritualists and Church leaders in Reykjavik in the 1920s¹⁷.

The 1930s witnessed a more peaceful and amiable relationship between the two bodies. By then many of Nielsson's students had been ordained as ministers in the Church and two were professors at the Faculty of Theology. The leading Spiritualists maintained that the majority of the clergy were friendly and sympathetic towards the movement (Morgunn XIII, 1932: 35; XV, 1934: 119; XVI, 1935: 200). This is not to imply that half of the clergy were members of ISPR, nor that they were active in psychic research; but it serves to indicate that they agreed that Spiritualism assisted in the struggle against materialism and, as such, was positive for Christianity.

7.9.3. The Structure of the Esoteric Movement

What has been referred to above as the Esoteric Movement was not a unified or well defined institution in terms of belief system or organization. It included not only the Spiritualists, but also groups like the Theosophists. It embraced abstract philosophies and more popularized versions of the occult and folk religion. In the following we will examine the characteristics which warrant grouping together such different religious forms into one movement and which pinpoint the significant aspects of this for the study.

In the sociological literature beginning with E. Troeltsch's The Social Teachings of the Christian Church, the esoteric movements have been characterized by the concept cult which refers to the social forms derived from mystical religious orientations. In his refinement of the category cult as opposed to that of church and sect, G. Nelson maintains that it characteristically places "...little importance on forms of worship and

doctrine or on historical factors but emphasises individual religious experience, the freedom of the individual, the liberty of conscience and they consequently encourage religious toleration" (1968: 470).

The cults within the Esoteric Movement are characterized by the absence of rigid organizational forms. In contrast to sects, cults "tend to have undefined boundaries, fluctuating belief systems, rudimentary organizational structures and are frequently highly ephemeral" (Campbell 1972:121). But there seems to be a general interest among people for the esoteric and the metaphysical which entices them to seek participation in the cults and this interest is in itself more stable than are the individual cults. This has lead sociologists to use concepts not confined to specific organizational forms such as occult establishment (Marty 1970:212-230), esoteric culture (Tiryakian 1971:491-510) and cultic milieu (Campbell 1972:119-136).

The belief systems of these movements are usually syncretic and ecumenical in the sense that they accept different paths to true spiritual enlightenment and members often participate in more than one cult to find the truth for themselves.

This "ecumenical" character of the cult movement is related to how societal relations and the problem of authority is solved (Wallis 1974: 303ff). For the sect, this question is settled once and for all due to the existence of a single coherent system of belief (doctrine). Those who do not accept it are by definition outsiders. The authoritarian and uncompromising commitment inbuilt in the socio-dynamics of the sect often leads to hostile confrontation and protest with society at large and particularly with the official religious model.

Consequently many sects isolate themselves in several respects from society or become introverted and denounce the reality of the social world outside. The cult pattern, on the other hand, is not authoritarian in this respect and shows a more pluralistic approach, and can therefore be integrated more easily with the differentiated social structure. Furthermore, its ephemeral social organization makes it easier to avoid confrontation with basic social values and institutions.

Individual participation in cult movements varies a great deal. Some people become actively engaged in one of the cults to the extent that the cult is associated with the total meaning of life while others participate mainly through buying its services and products (healing and literature). In comparison to what is commonly meant by religious sects, cults substitute the distinction believers vs. unbelievers with the degree of seekership, i.e. how far one has progressed on the path of truth (see Campbell 1972:124). This can be observed, for instance, in that the members of the Theosophical Society do not refer to themselves as Theosophists, but rather as Students of Theosophy.

There is some disagreement among sociologists of religion as to whether Theosophy and Spiritualism should be categorized as sects or as cults. Wilson (1970) applies a very inclusive conception of the sect, including what he refers to as the manipulationists and thaumaturgical groups, the precise categories which seem to have difficulties fitting into his own ideal type definition of sect (referred to on pages 1 and 26 ff in his

book). Nelson (1968 and 1969) uses the concept of cult for both groups, and his refinement of the concept assumes that cults may have some kind of permanent organization while simultaneously maintaining the basic characteristics of the cult. In our opinion, Spiritualism and Theosophy in Iceland are definitely to be classified as cult movements since both display the basic cult characteristics mentioned above. It is another issue that cults may develop into sects¹⁸.

The groups within the Esoteric Movement maintain, according to Wilson, manipulative characteristics in their conceptualizations of the paramount goals. These characteristics are found within both Spiritualism and Theosophy in Iceland and are of crucial importance in explaining their development and socio-political function.

Wilson writes of the manipulative orientation which he, because of his inclusive definition, refers to as a sect, but which we in line with Nelson would refer to as a cult:

The manipulationists have found a method by which to achieve salvation, but salvation is largely seen as the ability to realise the good things of the world, and particularly long life, health, happiness and a sense of superiority or even triumph. The sect provides short-cuts to attain these ends. These values are sometimes expressed in terms scarcely religious, although such sects have often presented their teachings in metaphysical language...

They are most evident in metropolitan centers, where relationships are impersonal and dominated by role-performances. The people who belong to the manipulationists sects regard themselves as sophisticates. Their sectarian adherences is, for them, the superior means of coping intellectually with the complexities of involvement in a social system and a way of life that can be comprehended only in abstract terms...

The sect is not "restorative" in seeking to justify the moral virtues of a rural past; rather it celebrates the benefits and the optimism of the future. It lines itself up on the side of progress, and presents itself as the real means of advancement into a brave new world (1970: 141f; emphasis mine).

The manipulative activities of these religious groups are often carried out under the headings of nomenclature drawn from the areas of education or health service. They give lectures, organize courses and train mediums and act as therapists and healers (Wilson 1970: 143ff).

The syncretic character of the Spiritualist and Theosophist teachings is well known and, as stated above, is characteristic of cult and esoteric movements in general. Both these trends have assimilated ideas and symbols from Christianity. In addition, Theosophy has borrowed from Eastern religions, in particular Hinduism, and its belief system is generally more systematic than that of the Spiritualists. The early contacts between the

Spiritualists and Theosophy are known and it appears that the more abstract and metaphysical teachings of the former are influenced more or less directly by some of the philosophical teachings of the latter. Theosophy may be seen as the philosophical explanation of spiritualistic and occult phenomena.

In Iceland these groups were relatively close. In time the Spiritualists became more of a loosely organized mass movement whereas the Theosophists were more theoretical and confined to their own organizational framework. It seems as if the Theosophical Society in Iceland was relatively independent in its doctrinal position vis-à-vis the international organization (it adhered to the Besant branch of Theosophy). Its leaders stressed that it was a society for seekers and, as such, "above all religions" (see, e.g. G. Fells 1966: 59ff, 74; and J. Kristinsson 1922: 59ff).

In Akureyri there was no difference between the Theosophists and Spiritualists who were united into one society, the Theosophical Lodge, since 1913; but in Reykjavik there was a clearer distinction between the two at least among the top leadership. Even if some disagreements existed concerning the more specific theosophical doctrines (such as reincarnation), the leaders of the two societies often stressed mutual sympathies and several members adhered to both societies (see e.g. S. K. Pétursson in Mbl VII, 202 7/7 1920; S. K. Pétursson 1923: 25ff; Morgunn XVI 1935: 65ff; Fells 1966: 48ff).

The Theosophists often stressed in both their internal and official correspondence their approval of liberalism and tolerance in religious matters and associated themselves with those forces within the church which agreed in this respect. Even though they were critical of the former monopoly of the State Church and of the dogmas of the Church (which they often interpreted in their own way rather than oppose them), the Theosophists as well as the Spiritualists usually considered themselves in harmony with the Christian religion. It was their hope that Theosophy could contribute to the moral upgrading of the population and revitalization of church life in a culture increasingly influenced by materialism and disbelief (see i.e.: Protocols of Systkinabandið; S. K. Pétursson 1922 and 1923: 28ff; Gangleri II, 2 1921).

In 1920, seven lodges existed and the Icelandic Theosophists had reached the longed-for goal of becoming a recognized independent national member group of the International Centre of Theosophists. Prior to this they, along with the Danish, had been members of the Scandinavian Section of the International Organization (Medlemsbladet II 1920).

The first president of the independent Icelandic Theosophical Society was a theologian and pastor, ordained by the Bishop of Iceland, and who had served among his countrymen in N. America.¹⁹ There were, however, only a few clergy members among the Theosophists. Until 1930, six theological students and theologians are registered and of these 3 became clergymen. The 1919 membership lists of the ISPR showed 11 theologians or theological students, 7 of which became clergymen within the State Church.

In 1913, the first Brotherhood of Freemasons was founded in Iceland. The chief initiator was the same person who had founded the first Theosophical Lodge in Reykjavik in 1912, the merchant and later bank director, Ludvík Kaaber, owner of the first independent whole-sale company in Reykjavik, founded in 1906 (H. S. Kjartansson 1974: 177; Frímurarareglan 1945: 14ff; Gangleri I, 6 1920). The first Freemason lodge was an annex to the Danish lodge and all members had to formally belong to a lodge recognized by the Danish section. It was not until 1919 that an independent Icelandic lodge was established in Reykjavik by 14 members mostly businessmen. In December of 1920, there were about 80 members. In 1929, there were 241 of which 10 were clergymen.

The Icelandic Freemasons were organized according to the Swedish Order which considered itself faithful to the teachings of the Christian church. As a prerequisite for admittance members were to confess the Christian religion (see Frímurarareglan 1945; I. Indriðason 1955: 26; Nórdisk Teologisk Uppslagsbok I, 1952: 970f)²⁰. In 1921 the order of Co-Freemasons was founded which included both men and women and rapidly became popular. The purpose and activity of the order was in "complete accordance with the objectives of the Theosophical Society" (Gangleri II,7 1921).

The rigid organizational structure of the Freemasons seems to oppose the above definition of cult. Nevertheless, G. Nelson defines Freemasonry as a cult; an example of a unitary and centralized cult. The survival of a cult in an religiously intolerant culture might be due to a formal and secret organizational structure (Nelson 1968: 473). The Freemasons have retained their secrecy (which requires organization) even while existing in more tolerant religious cultures. In the new context, the secrecy might serve other functions²¹

Abner Cohen points out that Freemasonry has different functions in different socio-political settings which are not determined directly by its doctrine or by its formal organization. The non-political aspect of Freemasonry and the secrecy serves special functions in this respect. Their lodges have served to organize conservative as well as progressive movements (Cohen 1974: 137). In his analysis of the Freemasons in Sierra Leone, he shows how their specific economical and political functions are contingent upon the structural characteristics of the society in which they operate. In the following we will attempt to analyze the role of this organization as a part of the Esoteric Movement in Iceland.

7.9.4 The Occupational Structure of the Esoteric Societies

Table 7.8 below on the occupational status of the members of ISPR is based on the only available membership lists and indicates 443 members in 1919, of which 210 (47 percent) were males. Of the 210, 12 percent were registered without occupational designation.

The author has been granted access to the membership list of the Icelandic Theosophical Society established in 1920. At the end of 1921, 267 members were registered on the lists; 143 or 53 percent were males. These

are included in Table 7.8, whereas the women are not because, as with ISPR membership, their occupational titles are not normally included.

In order to compare the occupational status of the members of ISPR, the Theosophists and the Freemasons, all Freemason members up to 1922 are classified according to occupation: there are 109 and all male.²²

Table 7.8 Occupational Status of Male Members of ISPR, Theosophists and Freemasons in Percent

	ISPR 1919	Theosophy -1922	Freemasons -1922
Higher officials	13	10	27
Merchants	20	8	40
Middle Class	31	43	23
Craftsmen	15	17	7
Fishermen/workers	2	6	1
Students	6	4	0
Farmers	1	4	1
No information	12	8	1
	100	100	100
N	210	143	109

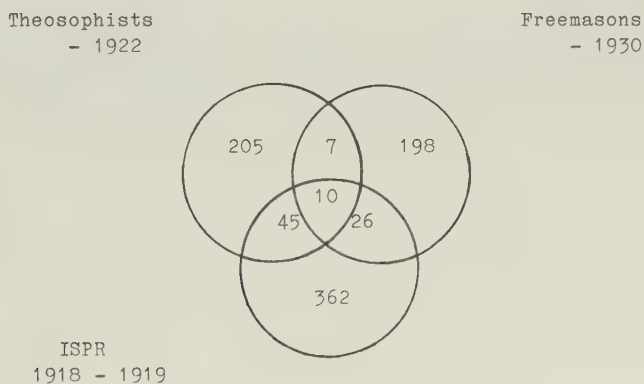
The table shows that the membership structure of all three Esoteric societies was overwhelmingly middle- and upperclass, whereas the YMCA, the Free-Church and the Adventists were of middle and working class composition (cf Tables 7.1, 7.2 and 7.6). This is most characteristic of the Freemasons who practically lacked manual labourers. It may be added here that a more detailed study of the category craftsmen in Table 7.8 would show that these were also merchants or owners of companies, and that many classified as middle class belonged to the more highly esteemed and better-off share of this category.

A closer analysis of the more prominent members of the Icelandic society using biographical lexicons (Tobiasson 1944 and Olason 1948-52), reveals that a large part of the most influential politicians and intellectuals were members of the Esoteric societies as were about half of the most wealthy businessmen and merchants. Here one finds the top leaders of the Cooperative Organization which became an influential business power at the beginning of the 1920s, along with the biggest private businessmen (bankers and owners of trading companies and fishing enterprises). These two groups had quite different economic and political interests which became one of the major political disputes in the wake of World War I.

One might ask why Freemason membership was important for these social

groups. For one, the Freemasons offered an ethical belief system combined with ceremonies in observance of a sense of brotherhood among its members. This was of crucial importance for the Icelandic bourgeoisie and middle class during these years of undeveloped internal economic and political institutions. Furthermore, the members were required to follow special rules, to harbour no enmity against each other and to settle all misunderstandings between them promptly and amicably (Cohen 1974:120). Thus, it is likely that the milieu provided by the Freemason lodges became a platform for the Icelandic bourgeoisie in which to solve tensions, particularly those arising between the private and Cooperative business companies. It also provided a basis for the articulation of common interests and identity. In this respect the Freemason society had quite the same social function as the occupational groups (corporations) analysed by E. Durkheim (1964:14-26). They provided the new social groups with a framework of moral order. The Theosophical Society also had similar functions, and to some degree the ISPR.

Figure 7.1 Membership Overlap: ISPR, Theosophists and Freemasons



(These figures do not fully correspond with those in Table 7.3 above since both males and females are included here. The figure also includes all Freemasons up to 1930 whereas the table is based on the same list up to 1922.)

An interesting pattern appears in comparing the overlapping membership of these societies. Fifty-five of the names on the ISPR list of 1919 also appear on the Theosophical Society lists of 1912-1922. This means that 20

percent of the Theosophists joined the ISPR during its first year of organization. Stated another way, of the initial ISPR members, 15 percent were Theosophists or became so before 1922. This supports the above statements to the effect that the teachings of the two societies were not considered contradictory; rather that they were considered as complementary in the individual's search for spiritual truth.

Figure 7.1 shows that 18 percent of the Freemasons until 1930 were also members of the ISPR and/or the Theosophical Society. A closer look at these individuals reveals that among them were the leaders of both the Theosophists and ISPR. On the other hand, it occurred seldom that the leaders of ISPR and Theosophists were members of the other Esoteric society. This means that the leaders of the Spiritualists and Theosophists came together in the Freemason Society. 16 percent of the members of ISPR and 12 percent of the Theosophists (males only) were members of the Freemason Society (or became so before 1930).

These figures indicate that these societies had much in common or that they complemented each other. Supportive of the hypothesis that the belief systems of these societies converged to maintain the same overarching religious ideology is the fact that only one outspoken member of the conservative theological front is included on any of the lists of the Esoteric societies.

As stated above, the Esoteric Movement was not confined to these three societies. The Theosophists influenced the religious beliefs of people who did not join them through their lectures and publications. The most popular movement and the one involving the greatest number of people who never became formal members was the Spiritualists. This is characteristic internationally of the Spiritualist movement (Nelson 1968:474; Wilson 1970:172).

In accordance with what was mentioned earlier, Spiritualism most clearly resembles the cult in that its socio-dynamics counteract organization. The largest part of the Esoteric Movement in Iceland was composed of informal local cults or circles, often formed on the basis of family relations or neighbourhoods where people came together from time to time to investigate spiritualist phenomena and receive messages from the spirits of the dead. A central figure within these cults, not necessary the medium, was often a member of the ISPR or was in contact with some of its leaders. All of the more serious or stable of these local cults either had personal contacts with the ISPR or someone in the group who was well acquainted with Spiritualist literature and techniques (see Pétursson 1980b: 25ff).

These circles were located in Reykjavík and in most of the townships throughout the country. It goes without saying that the popular version of Spiritualism of informal circles was more characteristic of folk-religion than were the abstract philosophies and metaphysics of the more intellectual versions of the esoteric teachings. It seems warranted to assume that the popularity of Spiritualism among the common people had something to do with its affiliation with folk-religion ideas which somehow remained

attractive. The Esoteric Movement concurred in time with the increasing publication of and popular interest in folk-sagas and legends, and leading Spiritualists showed interest for the supernatural and psychic phenomena of the legends.²³

But in spite of this connection between Spiritualism and folk-religion in Iceland, the former, together with the other Esoteric belief systems, was an urban phenomena and initially served to fulfil the religious needs of the intellectuals and the upper classes of modern society. In the West, Spiritualism is similarly classified as an urban phenomenon, meeting the religious needs of those living in rapidly growing industrial areas and those groups alienated from the official church religion (Nelson 1969:140. 189, 260ff). The different religious orientations observed within the Esoteric Movement could co-exist because of their syncretic nature and loose, ambivalent organizational framework. Spiritualism was presented as a science (gnosis) but not as a religion, and the ISPR defined itself as an institution of education. It was in fact an umbrella for various types of cults and circles mostly of informal character for which it provided frames of reference. It was the policy of the ISPR that atleast half the governing board should be academics. The manifest function of this was to give the society a scientific character but the latent function was to give Spiritualism social status.

The scientific terminology of the spokesmen of the Spiritualists and Theosophists, along with their emphasis on liberalism and tolerance made their religion more easily adaptable to modern society. The principles of science and tolerance were the most highly esteemed values and were supposed to constitute the moral basis of the new societal order of modern Iceland.

7.9.5. The Esoteric Ideology of the New Icelandic Centre

Some of the most radical and leftist politicians became Spiritualists or were in some way involved in the Esoteric movement. As indicated above, both the Spiritualist and Esoteric teachings were generally not anti-clerical or secularist. On the contrary, they associated themselves with what they defined to be the basic teachings of the Christian religion. In conjunction with Liberal Theology, they emphasized Christian Humanism and Liberalism. In this respect one may conclude that the Esoteric Movement acted as a buffer between the official religious model (the Church) and the desacralization of the intellectual life which, since the 1880s, was rapidly dominating the cultural life of the nation. This may also be seen in politics which, after the 1920s, no longer demanded the separation of church and state which had been a significant political theme since the 1890s (see Chapter 6.6). The Esoteric Movement was associated with a shift in the intellectual life of the nation; a shift from Realism towards a progressive Idealism and a romantic Nationalism (Einarsson 1948:86 ff).²⁴

The Esoteric societies became more open (except of course the Freemasons) in the second and third decades and their message to the world was universal brotherhood and the ethic of love and forgiveness related to faith in human progress and freedom of the individual. They were not destined to become a subculture as in the other Nordic countries; rather they became more or less accepted by society in general as long as their message was expressed in moderate forms; a policy adopted by the leaders.

Many of the leading Spiritualists (and these were also found among the Theosophists) were the most nationalistic of the Icelandic politicians and had access to the press. They cleared the way for the movement and gave it a certain esteem from the very beginning. Nationalism was most notably expressed by the "Nyalism", the theory of Helgi Péturss (see note 15). This was a syncretism of Spiritualism (he was among the first to participate in Spiritualist experiments), Theosophy (he was a member of the Theosophical Lodge in Reykjavik since 1914) and modern scientific terminology. Nordic, and particularly Icelandic, figures and heroes were given prominent status in the cosmic evolution according to his metaphysical teachings.²⁵

The hypothesis suggested here is that the Esoteric belief system, and particularly that of Spiritualism and Theosophy, might be looked upon as the ideology of the new bourgeoisie and the middle classes in Iceland during the second and third decades of the 20th century. The underlying assumption is that the rise of these classes and the associated processes of construction of a new Icelandic centre in Reykjavik was a part of a complete change of the social order. On the ideological level, this change was expressed most clearly in the religious development in Reykjavik.

The Esoteric Movement in Iceland had two main functions; the one was socio-political, the other socio-psychological. The Icelandic bourgeoisie was facing the prospects of using modern technology for the exploitation of natural resources (the fishing banks and waterfalls) and had great faith in science and economic progress. It was in accordance with their interests to become more independent. The ties with Denmark were, however, still strong although, economically and politically, they were rapidly deteriorating in the wake of the first World War (Chapter 2.4). As has been emphasized earlier, these classes did not experience autonomous existence in Iceland during the 19th century but were an integral part of the Danish economy and culture. This was an intermediate period in Iceland's economic and political history when the ties with Denmark were in fact crucially important for Iceland, but when Iceland was simultaneously in a process of breaking these ties and establishing new foreign relations.

The Esoteric Movement was functional in the sense of being apolitical, i.e. not "anti-Danish". On the one hand, to be anti-Danish for the bourgeoisie would have been in contradiction with their own immediate interests; but to be pro-Danish would have stifled the integration of the bourgeoisie as a natural element of the Icelandic society because of the political situation in the beginning of the 20th century.

Following this analysis, the socio-political situation of the bourgeoisie and the middle class may be characterized as an anomic situation²⁶

because of the absence of traditions and specific established norms for these classes in Iceland. Specific institutions regulating their economic and social behaviour, which would also serve as a source of identification and class consciousness, were largely absent in the Icelandic cultural pattern (see Chapter 4.3.2). But the ephemeral organizational forms of the Esoteric Movement provided an intermediate platform for the integration of the bourgeoisie into the Icelandic society and a ideology for the definition of themselves as a separate group. Of particular importance is the fact that the intellectuals and politicians were organized together with the capitalists and merchants in the Esoteric societies.

The esoteric belief systems with their relativism and emphasis on the evolution of the individual personality and "long life" were essential in the anomic situation which tended to foster expectations not in line with economic and social realities. Here we arrive at the second main function of the Esoteric Movement, namely, the socio-psychological.

As has been pointed out above, Spiritualism was most successful in the urban areas where the old cultural patterns and ways of life were rapidly being replaced by new ones, but this situation created problems associated with individual identity. The cultic forms were functional in a situation in which both established norms of cultural and religious pluralism were lacking. It was a situation where relationships were becoming impersonal and dominated by role performance, and where principles were presented in abstract terms rather than in emotional expressions as is characteristic of the typical sect. The cult formations were, furthermore, themselves a part of the cultural pluralism cultivating the basic values of individualism and tolerance while offering the new basis for personal and social integration. The clearest examples of esoteric philosophies being the ideology of the new classes can be found in the bourgeoisie newspaper Morgunblaðið in Reykjavik from 1918 to 1920 (Mbl VI,44 24/12 1918; ibid 20 30/11 1918; ibid 313 11/10 1919; ibid 314 12/10 1919, and No 316-320).

The esoteric metaphysics stressed universal brotherhood which was a natural standpoint to take for the new centre in establishing relations with the outer world and finding its place on the international scene of nation-states. The Theosophists and Freemasons were international organizations and the Spiritualists, though not formally, always emphasised the British Society for Physical Research as the model of their activities, whereas "Nyalism" was extremely nationalistic. Britain was the major alternative for financial and economic relations to which the Icelandic politicians looked for the sake of establishing new foreign contacts in the wake of the first World War (S. B. Jensdóttir 1980: 38ff). It is not unlikely that the membership of some of the societies (especially the Freemasons) turned out to be advantageous to the Icelandic bourgeoisie in their efforts to establish outside relations. It is striking how many Icelandic merchants representing foreign interests (Corps Diplomatique) were members of the Esoteric societies.

The esoteric ideology of the bourgeoisie and middle classes was not politically antagonistic to the working class in the sense of offending it. While only a few socialist politicians were participants, many socialist

writers were influenced by or were members of the Esoteric societies. The liberalism and tolerance of the movement in religious and theological matters was usually looked upon as a positive trend among the social democratic spokesmen of the working class.

The first serious attack against the ethics of Esoteric ideology came from the young professor and literary critic, Sigurður Nordal, in a series of articles appearing from 1925 to 1927, which E. H. Kvaran answered. The ensuing debate was carried out in cultural publications and aroused wide attention and interest in Iceland.

In 1930, the bourgeoisie for the first time consolidated to form one political party symbolically called the Independence Party. By this time the economy was chiefly in the hands of the Icelandic merchants and industrialists and the country was de facto independent. This period witnessed the domestic takeover of foreign affairs although the Danish administration formally remained in charge (according to the Treaty of 1918) until 1944. After 1930, members of the top elite within politics and business as well in education appear less frequently on the membership lists of the Esoteric societies.

7.10 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Although the plausibility structure of the State Church and its theology deteriorated following the 1880s, there appeared no religious or theological reaction to this until the turn of the century. The new religious ideas and groups were mainly concentrated to Reykjavík, the only real urban settlement in Iceland, established as a political, economical and cultural centre in the beginning of the 20th century.

All the new religious formations were in one way or another reactions to the desacralization of social control and intellectual life, and the breakdown of the plausibility structure of the former monopoly of the Church in religious matters. The new religious groups developed their own plausibility structures on the basis of the new social groups and strata.

Sect-like religious groups had little success and did not significantly influence the religious pattern in Iceland during the first three decades of the 20th century. They attracted some followers among the lower classes but not from the groups and strata most active in the formation of a more differentiated and pluralistic cultural centre in Iceland. On the other hand, the cult formations seemed to appeal to the new classes. The different societies within the Esoteric Movement appealed especially to the new Icelandic bourgeoisie and seemed to fit the specific social and political situation in which they found themselves.

The Esoteric Movement provided the platform on which the newly independent businessmen and merchants met with politicians and intellectuals under the auspices of the Brotherhood and the modern ideology of tolerance and optimism so much in line with their interests. Furthermore, this movement played a crucial role in bridging the gap between the Church and the intellectual stratum in Iceland, which, since the 1880s was being

increasingly alienated from the Church. The Liberal Theology and the Esoteric philosophies in their religious contexts can be characterized by what P. Berger and T. Luckmann mean by the privatization and subjectivization of religion. Their emphasis was on the freedom of the individual consciousness but not on the social order.

The persistence of nationalistic politics constituted a political dilemma for the new bourgeoisie at the beginning of the century. A united bourgeoisie party was not established until 1930, and by then, Iceland was de facto both politically and economically independent. Prior to this time the Esoteric Movement had provided an ideological alternative for the bourgeoisie and middle classes. The rapid success of this movement in Iceland at the beginning of the century, and its decreasing importance after 1930, indicates that it was an ideology of transition. T. O'Dea describes these movements and their socio-political role:

...in movements built upon ideologies - whether religious or secular - the leaders find a needed ideology of transition, while the followers (and often the leaders too) find satisfaction in their quest for community and their search for new values (1966:65).

The YMCA achieved great success in Reykjavík at the beginning of the century. It was theologically in line with the Lutheran Orthodoxy but its evangelization methods were quite new in Iceland. It was modeled after the YMCA work in Copenhagen which emphasized cultural and leisure activities in combination with evangelization among the younger generation. The backbone of the Icelandic YMCA was working class boys who, in the 1930s, became influential businessmen and politicians in Reykjavík. Much of the YMCA success during the first two decades of the century can be attributed to its ideology of transition. While it remained an influential religious organization affecting the Church life in Iceland, its social role diminished in the 1920s.

Notes to Chapter 7

1. Sources for the first years of the Salvation Army in Reykjavík are almost exclusively articles in the papers: Dagskrá 10/8 1896; *ibid* 14/11 1896; *ibid* 16/2 1898; Fjk XII, 46 13/11 1895; *ibid* XIII, 12 17/3 1896; *ibid* XIII, 31 11/8 1896; Isaf XXXV, 22 2/5 1908; Kbl V, 5 1895; *ibid* VI, 4 1896.
2. This presentation is based on Frasögn 1920; Herópið LXXX:3-6, 1975; Nkbl 1913:9; Fjk XV, 7 15/2 1898; *ibid* XV, 9 1/3 1898; Fjk XII, 20 14/5 1895, Fjk XX, 16 21/4 1903; Isaf XXXI, 20 11/4 1904; Membership register in the archive of the Salvation Army in Reykjavík.

3. Isaf XXVIII, 64 21/9 1901; Fjk XIX, 46 25/11 1902; ibid XX, 33 18/8 1903; ibid XX, 34 25/8 1903; ibid XX, 36 8/9 1903; ibid XX, 43 3/11 1903; Rvík IX, 36 18/8 1908; Skólabl II, 13 1908; Isaf XXXV, 38 27/6 1908; Vlj 1901, 10; Mkb1 1909, 11).
4. Information given the author in a personal interview with the present Catholic Bishop in Iceland, Mr. H. Frehen, 1978. In addition to the above mentioned sources on the development of the Catholic congregation, the following manuscript, made available by the offices of the Catholic Bishop in Iceland, has been used: G. Boots, The Catholic Church in Iceland Since 1875, an unpublished manuscript written in 1953.
5. There were a few other missionaries and lay preachers not mentioned in this presentation who travelled around in the name of some sect or denomination, but they did not establish congregations or permanent mission stations. Some of these published religious pamphlets. The most notable of these was Larus Jóhannsson, a lay preacher of Presbyterian influence, who returned home from N. America. Some of those who first joined the Salvation Army had come under his influence (K. Þorleifsson 1973, 1975-76).
6. In 1930 the official census shows 68 members of the Brethern congregation. The official statistics not only included the baptized members but also the children of the mothers who were members. This goes as well for the Pentecostal congregations whose own figures are usually lower than the official census figures).
7. This presentation of the Pentecostal movement in Iceland is based on the letters that appeared in the Evangelii Hárold 1921-1930, the magazine of the Swedish Pentecostals, and writings by the Swedish missionaries: E. Ericsson, 1946 and E. Martinsson, 1959.
8. Based on the membership lists of the Pentecostal and Plymouth Brethern congregations and complementary information given by the leaders of these congregations interviewed by the author in 1978 and 1979.
9. Soon afterwards, the missionary got into trouble with the superiors of the Nordic Union of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and was dismissed. Another was sent to the station in 1911. D. Östlund refused to leave and for a time there existed two Adventist congregations in conflict with each other until Ostlund finally left the country in 1914) (B. Snorrason 1975).
10. An observer of the religious situation in Reykjavik in 1899, after having described the general turn-away from the church, writes:
But even if it is so, and this is very peculiar about the religious situation, people want to hear about the Christian

religion and its teachings. People in general feel that there is something wrong about the situation as it is in religious and church matters. It is as if people are waiting, catching their breath, waiting for a life-bringing breeze that would save them. (F. Bergmann 1901: 294f)

11. In the October number of the magazine he writes against the Adventist doctrine of the Sabbath and in the first number of 1899, he started the series on Liberal Theology. The polemics continued in the press and gradually involved other theologians and drew considerable attention.
12. Apart from the articles in Vlj, Helgason expressed these standpoints already in a lecture given at the meeting of the clergy in 1899. He also wrote two essays on the Old Testament from the point of view of the Biblical Criticism that appeared in THIB 1900 and 1902. Furthermore, major articles appeared in N kbl 1908, 11 and 13. In 1915 a book was published composed of a series of articles originally published in the paper Lögrétta, 1913 (J. Helgason 1915). Major article by Haraldur Nielsson appeared in Skírnir 1908, covering the same issues as did Helgason.
13. Most of the YWCA membership lists have been destroyed, but the available figures show that in 1910 the main division had about 150 members and the youth division about 200. A membership list from 1926 indicates about 300 members in the main division.
14. See for instance Bjarmi II 24-25 15/12 1908; ibid III, 19 15/9 1909; ibid V, 9.30/4 1911; ibid VIII, 6 1/3 1914; ibid IX, 15 1/8 1915; ibid IX, 17 1/9 1915; ibid X, 4 7/3 1916; ibid X, 9 1/6 1916; ibid XII, 2 15/1 1918. The aversion of the sects towards the Esoteric Movement and Liberal Theology were expressed both in special pamphlets and in their press organs: Frækorn, Norðurljósið, Geislinn and Afturelding).
15. The dispute was most intense until 1908 but continued throughout the first decade. Isafold was most Spiritualistic in the beginning and supported the Spiritualistical interpretations through the second decade also. Following the death of Björn Jonsson one of his sons took over the paper and the publishing company under the same name. Various kinds of spiritualistic literature were published. Ingólfur, the paper of the National Guards published rather little of Spiritualistic character, but in 1906 Helgi Péturss, a natural scientist and Ph.D. from the University of Copenhagen, started publishing a series of articles on the interpretation of dreams, telepathy and Icelandic heroes which may be considered the introduction to his own specific esoteric teaching called "Nýalism". Nýall (meaning the one that brings forward the new truth) was the name of his first book in

which he presented his theories in 1919.

Reykjavík was the most aggressive publication against Spiritualism and the members of the Research Unit, and maintained this attitude until the change in editorship in 1910. The paper used Spiritualism politically against Björn Jónsson in the election campaign in the Autumn of 1908 (see, e.g. IX, 32 29/7 1908) and again upon his becoming a minister (X, 20 14/4 1909; X, 22 24/4 1909). In 1913 the paper was taken over by one of the most eager Spiritualists and naturally changed its policy towards the matter completely. There was much less written against Spiritualism by the papers in the second decade. Theosophy was much less discussed than was Spiritualism, and the Brotherhoods such as the Freemasons and the Odd-fellows were hardly discussed at all.

16. H. Kvaran "Mikilvægaða málið í heimi" (The Most Important Matter of the World), a lecture given in several places in the year 1918 and published in Morgunn I 1920:128 ff. This was also a recurrent theme of H. Nielsson's, e.g. in his collections of sermons, 1920 and 1928.
17. This was expressed at the funeral of H. Nielsson in 1928, which, according to his stated desires, was carried out in the Free-Church in Reykjavík and not the State Church (the Icelandic Cathedral) where he had not been admitted to preach in the later years of his life (see J. Kristinnsson 1968: 243; Nielsson 1922b: 17ff and 1922a: 96f).
18. For a more detailed presentation of this discussion see Nelson 1968; Richard and Adato 1980: 186ff; Wallis 1974: 316ff.
19. The chairman of the lodge in Akureyri was a retired State Church pastor. The first chairman of the Lodge in Reykjavík was Jon Áðils, the first professor of history at the University of Iceland. He had participated in the psychical research of the Research Unit.
20. The Odd-fellows (established in Iceland in 1897), a quasi-religious group can also be mentioned here together with the Freemasons. But the author has had no access to membership lists of their lodges in Iceland. On the other hand the Freemasons are usually thought to be more esoteric and metaphysical in their teachings and rituals. They are usually included in the presentations of the Esoteric Movement. See, e.g. Tiryakian 1971: 501; Dewar 1974: 101ff; Jones 1967: 152ff.
21. Secrecy may become one method of solving the problem of institutionalizing seekership. C. Campbell writes:

By creating several categories of membership corresponding to different degrees of initiation into new areas of knowledge it is possible to control the seekers exploration of new "mysteries" and so create within one organization the life-history that frequently occurs within the cultic milieu in general (1972:128).

22. There are no Co-Freemason membership lists available. The organization included both male and female members. The list of Freemasons is contained in the anniversary book of the Icelandic Freemasons published in connection with their 25th anniversary in 1945 and is available in the National Library in Reykjavík.
23. It seems that the interest for the "psychic" was more or less the motive for some of the collection of folk-sagas this century. There is often no way to differentiate between certain of the "psychic" stories of the Spiritualists and the folk-sagas (originating in the latter half of the 19th- or even 20th-century). Some publications referred explicitly to the interest in Spiritualism and folk-sagas at the same time. Leading Spiritualists saw spiritualist phenomena in the Icelandic Sagas and it occurred that the "psychic" people received messages from the heroes of these Sagas sometimes in order to rectify "common misunderstandings", especially about the most famous one Njalssaga (Pétursson 1980b: 24f, 38, 44).
24. One significant event deserves to be mentioned in this context which indicates this shift and perhaps even contributed to it. This was when G. Brandes refrained from being the intellectual model of the educated people in Iceland. In 1906, he had written several articles (pseudonymous) in Politiken (16/12 and 22/12) in a manner which offended the Icelandic people. This caused his greatest admirers from among the Icelandic politicians to abandon him (see Ingólfur V, 4 28/1 1907; Þjóð LIX, 4 24/1 1907; Rvík VIII, 6 25/1 1907; ; Lögr II, 4 23/1 1907, Isaf XXXIV, 4 26/1 1907).
25. It was, however, not until 1950 that a specific Society of Nýalists was founded but many Icelanders defined these theories as original Icelandic philosophy (for a more detailed presentation of Nyalism see Pétursson 1980b: 19ff). In the 1890s, H. Peturss was among the most active young intellectuals who wrote in Sunnanfari to denounce church religion on the basis of arguments from modern science (see Chapter 6.5.3).
26. This concept, which was originally used as a sociological concept by Durkheim, has been used in relation to the dissemination of the cult movements and ideologies (Tiryakian 1974:3 and Nelson 1969: 259).

8. Conclusion

Until the 1880s, the Icelandic culture and social structure was relatively homogeneous and undifferentiated. During the first half of the period dealt with in this study, the political nation-building process and socio-economic mobilization processes were carried out within this homogeneous environment and served as a consolidating force, primarily due to the domination of the alien Danish centre. This socio-cultural pattern which muted internal conflicts, constituted the frame of the Icelandic society at the onset of modernization and lead to the accretion of new roles for the clergy in the political and social mobilization processes. They formed the intermediary link between the national elite situated at the centre in Copenhagen and the farming population of Iceland. The following features of the clergy as a status group account for this role:

- 1) Their indigenous education and consequential integration with the national cultural traditions;
- 2) Their large proportion among the intellectual stratum and the relative closeness of that stratum to the Church until the 1880s;
- 3) The fact that a significant minority of the clergy itself had been a part of the national elite in Copenhagen;
- 4) Their "over-representation" as officials of the Establishment, and their relative independency compared with other officials, towards the Danish authorities;
- 5) Their way of life and economic position as "better-off farmers" and their frequent points of contact with the local people.

Their position as leaders of local societies and in local government strengthened their position as an important political factor on the national level. The large majority of the clergy in Alþingi represented the nationalistic views of a practically unanimous public opinion.

The basis of the Icelandic nation-building and of its identity was the historical heritage and the language, and not religion or theology. Thus, we do not observe an increase in religious involvement associated with the rise in national mobilization. Furthermore, the political nation-building

process could be carried out within the framework of the official religious model of the Danish centre for this very reason; the fact that the national identity was not nurtured primarily by religion.

As long as the official religious model remained unquestioned, the homogeneous farming population could be mobilized unanimously under the leadership of the clergy. It was, thus, in the interests of the national elite to maintain the plausibility structure of the official religious model which accounts for its national-conservative (rather than national-liberal) ideology since the middle of the 19th century and more or less throughout that century.

After 1880, the processes of differentiation can be observed at various levels which increasingly threatened the plausibility structure of the official religious model. These processes may be summarized according to the following:

- 1) Both relative and absolute decrease in the number of clergymen;
- 2) Socio-structural change. The rising of urban settlements and differentiation of the economy and, consequentially, a more mobile labour market. This was followed by more specialized and centralized socio-economic institutions, and this entailed the desacralization of social control and the transposition of economic and social undertakings from the responsibility of the clergy;
- 3) Administrative differentiation, specialization and democratization which also entailed desacralization, disengagement and transposition;
- 4) The alienation of a large part of the intellectuals from the Church which implied a rapid desacralization of the intellectual milieu.

Process 1 had already begun during the first half of the 19th century, but was intensified around 1880, and continued throughout the period under study. Process 2 was underway in the middle of the century but did not result in differentiation until about 1880. Process 3 started in the 1870s and was carried through in the first decade of the 20th century in the sense that the clergy and the Church had become formally disengaged from official administration and education. Process 4, which started in the 1880s, paved the way for alternative ideologies and legitimations. It was associated with a growing political and ideological critique of the official religious model. Its hegemony was broken by the establishment of the free press and laws on religious freedom which, together with the above

mentioned processes, cleared the way for a more pluralistic culture.

During the period of Process 4, one also observes a decline in religious involvement, but throughout the 19th century, the development is also characterized by the absence of religious change. The religious homogeneity was sustained throughout the century. The main reason for this was that the socio-cultural pattern was still conditioned by the mobilization against the alien centre. The national leaders managed to mitigate the domestic forces so as to uphold the official religious model despite growing dissatisfaction.

New religious formations and legitimations appeared first at the beginning of the 20th century. The ideas which formed the religious pattern of the 20th century, were reactions against the deteriorating religious situation. Their plausibility structures were based on the economical and ideological position of the new social classes and groups establishing a modern national centre in Iceland with its focus in Reykjavík. These new religious formations were based on the principle of socio-cultural pluralism which was being institutionalized in Iceland during the first three decades of the 20th century.

The religious "definitions of the situation" around the turn of the century were quite different. The "secularization" noted since the 1880s was conceptualized quite differently by the different groups. This is an indication of the ideological use of the concept which renders it quite useless in the social sciences (as discussed in Chapter 1.3) without analytical distinctions, the most useful of which are suggested by Dobbelaere.

One definition of the problem was that the official religion did not assimilate modern scientific ideas. This was meant to account for the alienation of the intellectual stratum - and in the long run the people in general - from the Church. The official religious model had to be redefined to render the essence of the religious teachings compatible with the modern world-view. This was the view of both the liberal theologians and the Esoteric Movement in Iceland.

The other main reaction defined religious decline as a result of the failure of the Church to sustain religious socialization and traditional religious standards. The official religious model was, accordingly, to be redefined only to the extent that it was not capable to live up to this task. The more secularization was a fact according to this definition, the greater was the dissatisfaction with the official religious model, and the more radical were the solutions put forward by this front, a few going as far as to suggest separation of church and state. This front, comprised mainly of the YMCA and the Mission Societies in Iceland, defined the Liberal Theology and the Esoteric ideologies as manifestations of secularization itself. On the other hand, the latter considered the Orthodox movement (the conservatives) an obstacle to religious renewal and the preservation of the Church as the religious centre in a modern society.

The Esoteric Movement, centered in Reykjavík, was a part of the new socio-cultural pattern. It brought about a resacralization of the intellec-

tual milieu and acquired social and ideological functions in integrating the new Icelandic bourgeoisie into the new Icelandic centre. The YMCA, whose style of evangelization and mission activities were also adapted to a pluralistic socio-cultural milieu, initially engaged the working-class youth in Reykjavik, with the members becoming socialized in the "Spirit of Capitalism", and rising to become a significant political and economical power in Reykjavik in the 1920s and 1930s. These two principle reactions, more and more, came to dominate religious and church life in Iceland.

What is characteristic about the development of religious pluralism in Iceland since the beginning of the 20th century is that it mainly was confined within the Church itself. The Christian sects and the Catholic Church had little success in Iceland, the major religious movements being the YMCA in cooperation with the Mission Societies and the Esoteric Movements, which had many points of contact with the Liberal Theology. That these quite different religious reactions were contained within the framework of the National Church is partly to be explained by the altered political stance towards the Church and its relation to the state. When the political nation-building process was finally brought to an end in 1918, the Church and the new Icelandic state consolidated and the matter ceased to be a political issue. The processes of differentiation, disengagement and democratization had reformed the Church, formerly a part of an alien centre, to where it became compatible with the interests of the new state in controlling the religious culture. The framework of the Church was, thus, made strong enough to keep together the different religious orientations.

A precondition for the relative peaceful process of "secularization" in Iceland was the fact that the administrative disengagement of the Church from civil society was well underway before religious pluralism was introduced. With the beginning of the politics of redistribution and equalization (Phase 4 of Rokkans centre-building process of the modern welfare state), the political role of the clergy was terminated. Thus, they did not become politically associated with the social and economic interests of any of the major political interest groups. The maintenance of the formal structures of the Church and the confinement of the religious factions within that sphere further prevented the association of religious issues and ideologies with political and social issues. The official religious model was maintained mainly as a rhetoric of the state. The Church, differentiated from the social and economical sectors of society, allowed its further differentiation and specialization without religious interference. At the end of the period of our study, the Church found itself at the periphery of Icelandic society; whereas, in the beginning, it had been integrated with society on practically all levels. This process of "secularization" was also characteristic of the other Nordic countries where the state-church system was maintained, but it seems in comparison, that the religious sphere in Iceland about 1930, was more confined "within its own limits", i.e. disengaged from social and political issues. In the other Nordic countries, social and political issues became variously associated with religious and theological standpoints. The relatively peaceful process

of disengagement of the primary education from the Church is a crucial indicator of the "beneficent spiral". This process was more peaceful in Iceland than in any of the other Nordic countries. Another indicator of this is the fact that religiously inspired political parties have been established in all of the Nordic countries except for Iceland.

In 19th century Iceland, we observe a religious model which might be characterized as a "Protestant Monopoly". This model differs from a "Catholic Monopoly" according to D. Martin in that:

...the church was based on subordination from the start, it had no independent theory of its social paramouncy and it was itself the seed-bed of the individualism loosening the organic structure which in formal terms it might still seem to support (D. Martin 1978: 38).

This "lack of independency" of the Protestant Model in social and political issues accounts for the fact that the Church of Iceland could be associated with different political standpoints in the crucial nationalistic issue: that of the position of Iceland within the Danish state. The majority of the clergy in Alþing supported the nationalists whereas the top leaders of the Church had to take into consideration the will of the Danish Government. Theology and religion per se were, thus, neutralized in relation to this main political issue.

The Church of Iceland had no autonomy as a central organization, and had no organizational facilities to provide organic reaction against social change. The leadership was integrated with the state authorities, but, on the other hand, the clergy was integrated with the local community. The criticism of the Church leadership itself, since the 1980s, was not primarily religiously or theologically but politically motivated. It was not associated with any significant anti-clericalism or "secularism". The secularism of the Copenhagen-based intelligentsia was mitigated as soon as they were faced with the political realities in Iceland which made any political programme associated with anti-clericalism impossible to carry through. In the beginning of the 20th century, the Esoteric Movement and the Liberal Theology lessened the tension between the intellectual milieu and the Church by "resacralizing" many of the existential questions.

The basic paradigm for the beneficent circle in Iceland was, on the one hand, the homogeneous religious and cultural pattern during the political nation-building process in Iceland, and, on the other hand, the rapid process of differentiation combined with the institutionalization of religious pluralism while the new centre was being established in Reykjavik.

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ANDVARI (The Watchful; The Breeze) an organ of the Society of the Icelandic Friends published in Copenhagen and since then in Rvík.

ARMANN A ALÞINGI a publication of Icelandic students edited by Baldvin Einarsson.

EIMREIDEN (The Locomotive) a publication of a group of Icelandic intellectuals edited by Valtýr Guðmundsson.

FJÖLNR a publication of a group of Icelandic intellectuals.

DEN INDRE MISSIONS TIDENDE the organ of the Danish Inner-Mission Society.

MEDLEMSBLADET, Det Teosofiske Samfund for Danmark og Island.

NORDURFARI (Northward Bound) a publication of Icelandic intellectuals.

NÝ FÉLAGSRIT, /Nélr/ (The Paper of the New Society) published by a group of Icelandic intellectuals in Copenhagen and edited by Jón Sigurðsson.

SUNNANFARI (Southward Bound) monthly magazine published by Icelandic students

TRÖSTERMANDEN a publication of the Association of the Danish Seventh Day Adventists.

ZIONS VÆGTER a publication of Danish Seventh Day Adventists.

Published in Canada (Winnipeg)

SAMEININGIN, /Sam/ (The Union) periodical of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Icelanders in North America.

Published in Sweden

EVANGELII HAROLD a publication of the Swedish Pentecostal Movement.

Published in Iceland

AFTURELDING (Daybrake) a magazine of the Icelandic Pentecostals.

BJARMI (The Gleam) a monthly religious paper of the Evangelical Publication Society till 1916, since then edited by Sigurbjörn Gíslason, the leader of Inner-Mission in Iceland.

DAGSBRÚN (Day Brake) political newspaper.

FJALLKONAN /Fjk/ a political paper.

FRÆKORN (Seeds) a publication of the Seventh Day Adventists in Iceland.

FRÓÐI (The Knowledgeable) a newspaper.

GEISLINN (The Beam) the magazine of the Seventh Day Adventists in Iceland.

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ISAFOLD, /Isaf/ a political newspaper, edited by Björn Jonsson.

KIRKJUBLADID, /Kbl/ The Church Paper, edited by Þ Bjarnarson.

KIRKJURITID, a Churchly magazine.

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LÖGRETTA, /Lögr/ a political newspaper.

MÁNADARTIDINDI KRISTILEGS ÆGLINGAFÉLAGS, the monthly paper of the Christian Youth Society in Reykjavik

MORGUNN (Morning), organ of the Icelandic Society for Psychical Research.

MORGUNBLADID (The Morning Paper), a political newspaper.

NORDURLAND /Nl/ (Northern Traveller), a political newspaper.

NORDANFARI /Norðanf/, (He who comes from the North) a political newspaper.

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NÝTT KIRKJUBLAD, /Nkbl/ The New Churchly Paper.

REYKJAVÍK /Rvík/, a political newspaper.

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SKÍRNIR, magazine of the Icelandic Literary Society. First published in Copenhagen.

SKÓLABLADID /Skbl/, The School Paper, magazine on Educational matters.

SKINNFAXI, magazine of the Icelandic Youth Organisation UMFÍ.

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VERÐI LJÓSD, /Vlj/, (Let There Be Light), a Churchly magazine, edited by Jon Helgason.

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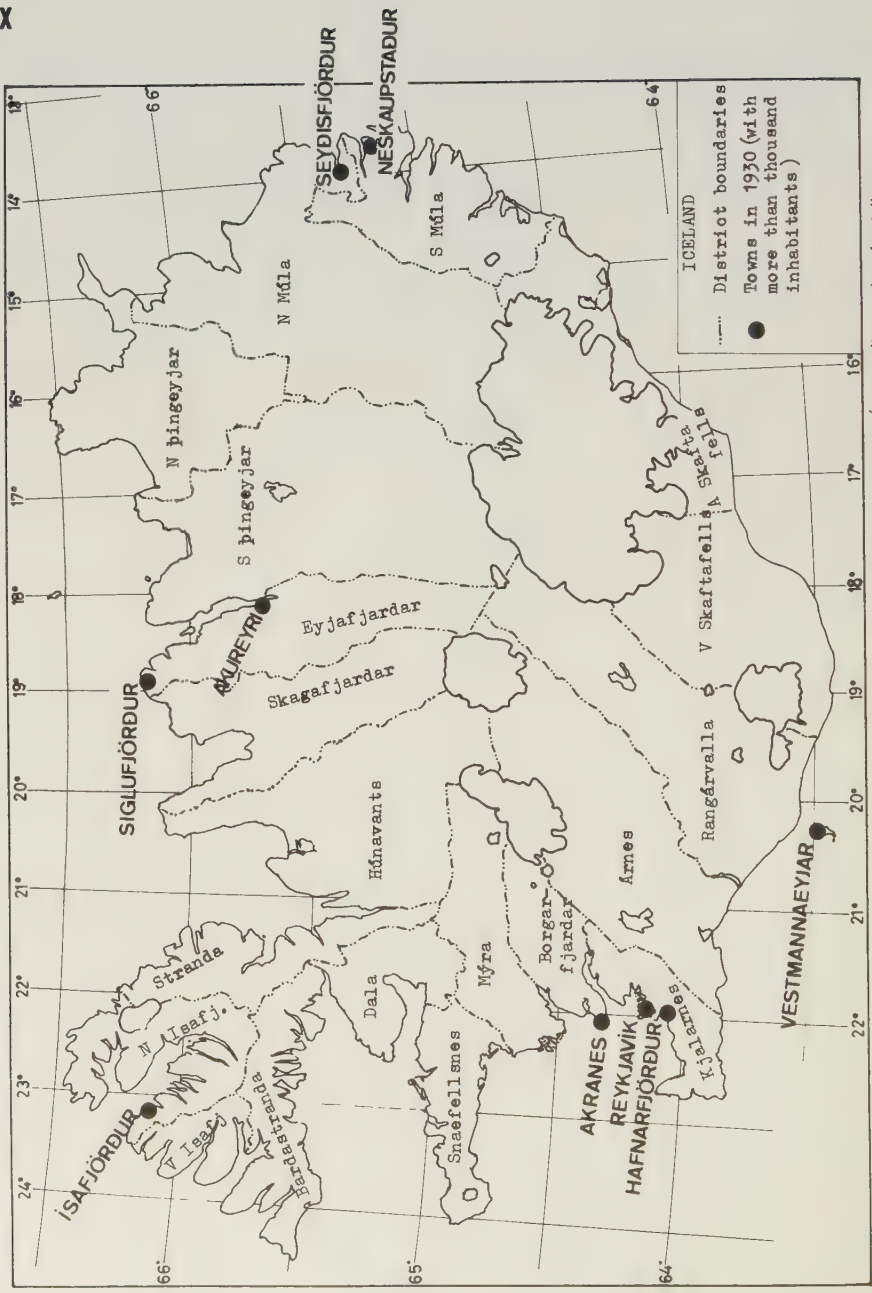
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Alm þjvf	= Almannak þjóðvinafélagsins
Alpt	= Alþingistíðindi (before 1881 Tíðindi frá Alþingi)
Fjk	= Fjallkonan
HIB	= HÍð Íslenska bókmenntafélag
HÍ	= Háskóli Íslands
ISPR	= Icelandic Society for Psychical Research
Isaf	= Ísafold
Kbl	= Kirkjublaðið
Lofs f Isl	= Lovsamling for Island
Lögr	= Lögrétta
Mbl	= Morgunblaðið
Mfélr	= Ný félagsrit
Mkbl	= Nýtt kirkjublað
NI	= Norðurland
NIj	= Norðurljósii (political newspaper)
Norðanf	= Norðanfari
Rvík	= Reykjavík
Sam	= Sameiningin
Skólabl	= Skólablaðið
Skýr um landsh	= Skýrslur um landshagi
SFFI	= Sálarrannsóknarfélag Íslands
Stjt	= Stjórnartíðindi
TIME	= Tímarit hins íslenska bókmenntafélags
Tstjm Isl	= Tíðindi um Stjórnarmálefni Íslands
UMFI	= Ungmenafélag Íslands
Veyj	= Vestmannaeyjar
Vlj	= Verði ljós
Þjóð	= Þjóðólfrur
Þjóðv	= Þjóðviljinn

APPENDIX



LUND STUDIES IN SOCIOLOGY

1. Kurt Törnqvist:
Studieintressen och studiemotiv hos vuxna.
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3. *Ulla Carin Holm*, *Hennes verk skall prisa henne*. Studier av personlighet och attityder hos kvinnliga präster i Svenska kyrkan. (With a summary in English.) 1982.
4. *Pétur Pétursson*, *Church and Social Change. A Study of the Secularization Process in Iceland 1830-1930*. 1983.

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